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Feature Detective Story

Trapping the Jewel Smugglers

by Boulah Poynter

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Good Things Coming

IN former chats with our readers we requested them to recommend this magazine to their friends. It is evident that many have done so, for we received numerous letters to that effect. Besides, the circulation has increased amazingly. We wish to thank you for your kind interest, and hope you will keep up the good work. It costs a great deal to get out a magazine like this one for ten cents a copy, and we have to sell an enormous number to pay the cost of production. We are now able to procure the finest stories by the most eminent authors for your amusement. The next number is going to contain one of the best feature detective stories we have ever published, entitled "The Missing Evidence." Harold F. Podhaski is the author. You have read his short stories in our pages and know how interesting they were.

Among the short tales there will be one from the well-known magazine writer Harriet Mason, called "The Midget Detective," which cannot fail to please. Howard Philip Rhodes contributes a fine detective yarn entitled "Queen, Knave and Ace," and Joseph Burke is the author of a splendid bit of fiction called "The Detective's Rival." A new authoress, Josephine S. Brooks, is responsible for "The Tick of the Clock," and there will be a story, "The Smile Trap," by Warren W. Van Gorden. The second instalment of the serial, "The Black Diamond," is even more interesting than the first, and you will enjoy it. We have been particularly careful in selecting the large number of short articles to be issued in the July 1st number. They are all especially interesting and cover a wide range of pertinent subjects. Some of the most famous professional writers in the world are contributing these articles—professors, doctors, scientists and other people of great learning. We strongly urge you not to miss reading No. 112, for it is going to be one of the very best issues we have ever published. A reader recently asked why we only advertised a few of the stories we were going to publish. As many others probably do not understand our reason, we will explain it here. When making up the magazine we select a few stories that will fit in, and after we ascertain how much blank space is left we fill in with as many more stories as may be necessary to complete the magazine. Hence it is not possible to advertise all the titles in advance. We generally give you more than we promise, and figure that no one will be dissatisfied with such an arrangement.

THE EDITOR.



TRAPPING THE JEWEL SMUGGLERS

by
Beulah Poynter

CHAPTER ONE

McFALLEN swung about in his swivel chair to face his caller, a slim, extremely tall, white-haired man, whose long nose and thin, twitching lips proclaimed a touch of asceticism.

"Mr. Collingsby?" McFallen consulted the bit of cardboard which his dumpy, red-faced office boy had placed on his desk.

The tall man nodded. The lids of his piercing slate-colored eyes quivered, and as he adjusted his nose glasses his hands trembled.

With an effort McFallen lifted his ponderous body from his chair and extended a plump, hairy hand toward his visitor.

"Sit down," he said; then he sank back into the chair he had just vacated.

Mr. Collingsby seated himself facing his host, carefully placing his silk hat on the desk and folding his thin blue-veined hands in his lap.

"You must pardon my ignorance," McFallen continued, "but I'm compelled to confess that the name Collingsby means nothing to me. You are here in a professional way, I surmise?"

His visitor cleared his throat.

"I am, sir. Collingsby & Collingsby are importers of high-grade musical instruments—

oboes, violins, bassoons, French horns, saxophones, all reed, string and brass instruments, in fact."

"Oh!" McFallen's shrewd yellow eyes twinkled; he reached into his vest pocket, and with stubby thumb and forefinger extracted a couple of cigars. "Smoke?"

"No, thank you." Mr. Collingsby hitched his chair closer to the detective's and lowered his voice to a confidential whisper. "Mr. McFallen, about four times a year we import a shipment of these instruments; the reminder of the time we handle goods made in this country, manufactured in Indiana, Jersey and adjacent cities. You understand? Now, something very unpleasant has occurred, something which, unless we can trace it to its proper source, is going to throw the firm of Collingsby & Collingsby, of which I am senior partner, into disrepute, or cause us to discontinue the importation of foreign-made instruments, thus compelling us to handle only domestic ones—a great loss both in money and prestige." He paused as though for breath, for he spoke very rapidly in a tense, almost hoarse whisper.

"And that is——?" McFallen lighted his cigar and puffed sloyly upon it, his small shrewd eyes half closed.

"Unquestionably, Mr. McFallen, you have heard of the extremely valuable diamonds

which have been smuggled into this country in the past year?"

"Yes, it's my business to hear of such things."

"Do you realize that shortly before these stones appeared a shipment of instruments for my house also came into port?" Collingsby leaned eagerly forward.

The detective laughed.

"Don't tell me, sir, that any one is associating your firm with this diamond smuggling?"

"I don't know that any one is, Mr. McFallen, but to me it seems more than coincidental that those diamonds should practically always appear about the same time as my instruments."

"You seem to be pretty well versed upon the diamond proposition," ventured the detective dryly.

"I am, sir. About a year ago when the Duchess of Troy stone was purchased in Paris, and later appeared here, having been purchased—I've forgotten by whom—I remember the papers commented on its arrival in this country, and figured that by some hook or crook it must have been smuggled in on the steamer *Cedric*. My principal buyer, Frank Arden, was on that boat."

"Honest chap, this Arden?"

"I'd bank on him; besides, on the second voyage that year his assistant, Lewis, did the buying, Arden being down with the flu at the time. A month later a necklace of exquisite gems appeared, for which no duty had been paid, you remember?"

"Yes, they caused their purchaser, Mrs. Alice Castlemain, no little dismay, though she easily proved where she had bought them and the dealer did likewise, but the man who had sold them to the dealer had disappeared; to my knowledge his whereabouts have not been traced as yet. I am not handling the case; the government is." McFallen laughed a trifle sarcastically.

"If you care to go into the matter," continued the importer, "you will find that in five distinct cases these smuggled jewels have arrived at about the same time as my shipments of instruments; it certainly begins to look as if the two were working together, and yet—"

"Who is doing your buying now?"

"Arden again."

"But if you are certain of his integrity, why do you feel that he is any way in cahoots with the smugglers?"

"I don't feel that he is, but I feel that some one who is aware of my shipment is making use of it to smuggle stones into the United States to some one else who is in a position to dispose of them. I am absolutely positive of this, Mr. McFallen, so positive that I want you to handle the case and exonerate me!" The tall man rose, and in his excitement paced the length of the small stuffy office.

McFallen removed his cigar and studied in silence for a few moments.

"You must have suspicions in some quarter, Mr. Collingsby," he said at last. "You would not wish to employ the assistance of a high-priced detective if you hadn't. We have to have something besides mere coincidence to work upon, you know."

"You'll probably think I'm crazy, sir," returned the importer, "but I haven't a tangible clue. When the first stone appeared I was interested, that was all; the arrival of the necklace apparently coming in on the same boat puzzled me, the third gem intrigued me, also my wife; the fourth annoyed, distressed me; now I am worried beyond measure—"

"And your wife?" interrupted the detective.

"It is due to my wife I am here." Collingsby's thin face flushed a trifle. "She is very intuitive; she calls it psychic. Oh, you must admit," he protested as McFallen shrugged his shoulders impatiently, "there is something in the sixth sense possessed by highly strung women; then also she has closely followed the purchase of these stones in France and England, also the sale of them in this country; she is an extremely clever woman. Do you know, McFallen, that to help retrieve his fortunes Andrew Cordoven has just sold an emerald belonging to his wife for over fifty thousand dollars?"

McFallen shook his head.

"Well, he has. My wife reads the foreign papers. This jewel thing is a hobby of hers. She is positive that this emerald will appear in New York shortly after the *Cedric* does, the boat on which Arden is to return in another month with my spring lot of goods."

"Is Arden in France now?"

"No. He is sailing in a week for the continent."

"Is it possible for me to meet him in other than a professional way before he goes?"

Collingsby hesitated a second. "Yes—er—I think it can be arranged," he said doubtfully; "occasionally he dines at our house on a Sunday evening; possibly you could have dinner with us at the same time. I don't think your face is familiar to him."

McFallen smiled. "My face is familiar to very few persons, Mr. Collingsby. Had I not been alone to-day you would have consulted an operator instead of me. I find it more advantageous to stay in the background, and," he added as if having read the other's thoughts, "you need have no fear in regard to my conduct; I—I was reared as a gentleman."

"My dear sir!" protested the other, "I was wondering about a dinner companion—er——"

"I should like to bring one of my operators if I may," the detective said quickly.

Collingsby did not hide the quick spasm of dissent that shot across his features. It brought a laugh from McFallen.

"An operator I shall put on your case if I handle it, a young, charming and very clever lady," he added, "one in your own station of life, Mr. Collingsby, who has chosen criminal investigation as a career in preference to dawdling her time away in society."

"In that case—yet it seems to me a man would be more able under the circumstances."

"I have no man the equal of Leslie Kelvin," the detective spoke with finality. "When do we dine with you?" He rose as though dismissing his guest.

"This coming Sunday unless my wife has other plans; in such event I will let you know."

"Very well, Sunday, at what hour?"

"Our dinner is usually at seven. Is that satisfactory with you?"

"Perfectly."

The tall gentleman reached for his hat and stick and started toward the door.

"Just a moment, Mr. Collingsby, your address; it isn't on your card!"

"Oh, pardon me; I'm a bit flustered," he apologized, then handed the detective another bit of engraved cardboard, upon which was his private address.

"Also," said McFallen slowly, "Miss Kelvin and I are not in our professional capacity when we call upon you. I am an out-of-town friend, from Chicago let's say; Miss Kelvin is my niece."

Again Collingsby hesitated. He looked speculatively at McFallen, studied the top of his boot, then decisively moved toward the door. "All right," he said abruptly, "I shall expect you and—er—Miss—er—Kelvin Sunday at seven. I shall inform my wife and tell her who you are."

"I'd rather you didn't. I should prefer that no one know my reasons for being in your home. In fact, it is imperative that no one know, otherwise I shall not handle your case."

"Very well."

CHAPTER TWO

LESLIE KELVIN, charming and exceedingly lovely in a gown of amber-colored satin, over which she had thrown an evening coat of lustrous mink lined with the same vivid color, stepped from the entrance of the apartment where she lived into the machine beside which stood Tim McFallen, immaculate and resplendent in dinner attire.

His keen glance of appreciation brought a smile to the rather severe lines of the girl's mouth; a faint rosy glow stole from the curve of her rounded chin high to her forehead, where milk-white skin joined coils of blue-black hair—hair smooth as the satin fold of her gown and banded about a small well-formed head. Eyes startlingly blue under their straight black brows greeted him frankly through heavily fringed dusky lashes; eyes with an almost boyish expression, which seemed to penetrate through flesh, muscle and bone in their effort to read what was taking place inside his brain.

She was not tall, but her extreme slimmness, narrowness of shoulder and hips gave the impression of height, not angular nor thin, but small of limb without a hint of fragility; a lithe young stripling of a woman, vibrant with youth, glowing with health and rich in coloring. Regular features saved from insipid beauty by the force of character behind them, the

intelligence betrayed in sparkling eyes and mobile lips; a girl to be reckoned with, worth while as a friend, or even as an enemy.

"Do I look my part, Tim?" she laughed, letting her gloved hand rest on his for a second as he helped her into the car.

"You *are* the part," he answered. "But seeing you makes me think I've got a lot of nerve to introduce you as my niece."

"Well, don't forget our relationship, that's all!" she bantered.

Jonas Collingsby and his family resided in an old-fashioned three-story stone house in the upper eighties off Fifth avenue, yet near enough to give the place a distinction it would not otherwise possess. There was a high wrought-iron fence enclosing a morsel of a garden and a gate with huge gargoyle knockers at the entrance.

After alighting from the car McFallen pulled at the knocker several times before a man in a livery of dark plum-colored broadcloth opened the front door of the dwelling and simultaneously swung open the gate. A flood of light from the interior outlined the man's head in its white colonial wig, then shone full upon Leslie Kelvin when she mounted the three steps which led to the entrance of the house itself.

Collingsby, palpably nervous, but using extreme efforts to appear at ease, met his guests in the drawing-room, and presented them to his wife, a little bird-like woman with tarnished flaxen hair fast turning white. Her small figure encased in a gown of black chiffon velvet paniered to meet the fashion might have stepped out of a Joshua Reynolds painting; her uncertain, quivering sort of smile seemed a thing detached from her and only put on and taken off as occasion demanded.

When they entered a third occupant of the room rose from a stool at the piano and stood waiting to be presented after his mother had greeted the visitors. This young man was the Collingsby heir, Eugene, twenty-five years old, tall, slim like his father, good-looking in the cut-and-dried New York way, patent-leather-like dark hair brushed from a rather low forehead, from which a cowlick had been shaven; pallid face, not from lack of health, but from an aimless, ambitionless existence; red lips and white teeth; clothes fitting every turn and

curve of his sinuous body; long arms and long, tapering brown fingers; dark rather deep-set eyes with an almost oriental slant to them, slumberous, passionate eyes of real beauty. His voice when he spoke was mellow, rather deep; he lingered a trifle on Leslie's name as he pronounced it, and again a flush colored the opaline cream of her cheeks.

The introduction had scarcely taken place when the butler announced Mr. Arden and Miss Olliphant. Leslie Kelvin turned slowly from young Collingsby, not wishing to show any undue interest in the man she had come to meet, but desiring a passing glance of him before he discerned her.

Arden entered the room with an easy arrogance that somehow was not offensive; a homely man with a large head set upon broad, muscular shoulders; tall, long-limbed, great-muscled, unusually large of physique. His face was not unpleasant because of the keen appreciation of humor betrayed by the curve of his rather full lips, the crinkles around his gray eyes, and the broad but expressive nose.

Leslie decided she liked him, and in a glance toward her chief informed him of the fact. She could not say the same for the young lady who arrived with him. At first she fancied the girl had accompanied Arden, but seeing the wrapt attention that Eugene Collingsby bestowed upon her, she decided differently. Later in the evening during the dinner she learned that young Collingsby was engaged to Audrey Olliphant, and that Arden was a widower with a small daughter whom he adored.

Just why she disliked the Olliphant girl she was uncertain, for from surface appearances she was charming with a great deal of dash and style and a fund of small talk. Her voice was a trifle shrill, but that Leslie excused on the ground that most flappers had high voices, and the girl was still obviously in the flapper class in spite of her height, which was easily five feet ten. Her red bobbed hair and wide-open green eyes added to the youthfulness of her appearance.

After dinner, which was served in a formal manner, smacking of the quaint little hostess and the austere-looking old man. McFallen managed by a clever maneuver to draw Collingsby aside. His host, taking the hint, guided him and Miss Kelvin to his study. There the

girl lighted a cigarette and studied the faces of the men as they talked through the rings of smoke she blew about her dusky head.

"Mr. Collingsby," McFallen began without any preamble, "I like your buyer. If he has anything to do with the smuggling of these diamonds I admit I'm no reader of character."

Collingsby smiled, just the faintest twitching of his lips.

"I am glad to hear you say that. I should hate to mistrust Arden; he has been with me for ten years, and is invaluable, and yet— You haven't said if you will take charge of the case for me, Mr. McFallen?"

"I will." McFallen struck a match, but immediately extinguished it, for the end of his cigar was already aglow, but in the brief flame-up of the little spark Leslie Kelvin read in his eyes what he wished to convey to her; then he continued: "This Lewis who went abroad for you once—what about him?"

"Oh, I doubt if he is clever enough to handle anything so gigantic as a diamond-smuggling proposition; he fell down woefully on my shipment, and I'm afraid is rather stupid in more ways than one. If he were not an old man I should have dismissed him some time ago."

"It's the stupid ones we usually need to watch," said McFallen grimly.

Leslie, who had strolled away for a moment, swung around in a leisurely fashion, lifting a silver-framed photograph from its position on an ornamentally carved sheet of drawers.

"Miss Olliphant?" she inquired casually.

"Yes," answered the merchant.

"What an attractive picture! And altogether charming girl!" enthused Miss Kelvin.

"Yes, she is a lovely young person," Mr. Collingsby admitted, though a trifle grudgingly it seemed to Leslie. "She is my son's fiancée."

"Fancy! How delightful!" She studied the pictured face for several moments before she returned it to the original position. "Is—is—Miss Olliphant a New York girl? I may be mistaken, but it seemed to me she had a slight accent. English, isn't it?"

The importer's face shadowed the merest trifle.

"Audrey is a Canadian girl; she—she is an

orphan; my son met her in connection with my business."

"So?" Leslie's straight brows lifted in her best "social manner."

"She is my secretary."

"Oh. How clever she must be! She looks a mere child, and yet—" She hesitated.

"Audrey looks a great deal younger than she is," said Collingsby, obviously bored by the trend the conversation had taken. "She has been in my employ three years; she was twenty-one when she joined me."

"Oh!"

"Mr. Collingsby," said McFallen abruptly, "to-morrow I shall see you at your place of business. There is a boat sailing for Paris Wednesday. Miss Kelvin will take passage on it; I wish all data concerning the passage in France where you purchase your instruments, the names of the various manufacturers, etc. Please have these ready for me by some time after three o'clock to-morrow. Now, I think we had best join your family and guests."

"But, Mr. McFallen, have you any idea?"

The detective shrugged his heavy shoulders.

"I've nothing definite to work on; if I had I would tell you. As you say you do, I shall trust to woman's sixth sense this time—Miss Kelvin's. You wish the integrity of your firm protected. To the best of my ability that is what I am going to do. I can guarantee you, Mr. Collingsby, there will be no gems smuggled into the States on the same boat which brings your shipments of musical instruments, incidentally the one on which Miss Kelvin will return; beyond that I've nothing further to say!"

"You're setting a terrible task for me, Tim," said the girl; "are you sure I can make good?"

"Positive of it."

CHAPTER THREE

THE shrewd glance of inquiry that Frank Arden gave them as they entered the drawing-room informed both McFallen and his charming employee as plainly as words that not only was Collingsby's buyer aware of their vocation, but the reasons why they were in the merchant's home. A dark scowl settled

upon McFallen's swarthy face, and momentarily Leslie felt certain he was going to inform Collingsby he had no intention of handling his case. Then as his frown lifted and the detective smiled again, she knew that he had reasons of his own for continuing with it.

A little later McFallen begged his hostess to excuse him, and his niece, pleading a busy day on the morrow, bent graciously over the slender hand of the little old lady, bowed to the guests and, with Leslie wrapped warmly in the luxurious folds of her fur garment, made his exit.

"Well?" sighed Leslie as she sank back into the leather cushions of the machine. "What's doing, Tim?"

"You'll know soon enough," he answered. "You're sailing Wednesday for Paris."

"Yes? But if Arden isn't—"

"There's a bigger nigger in the woodpile than Arden," said McFallen.

"You don't mean—" The girl gasped and strove to see her companion's face in the semi-darkness. "Timmy!"

His heavy jaw pointed straight ahead, the big head set squarely on the broad shoulders did not move, nor did he answer her question until he had driven up directly in front of her door, come to an abrupt stop, and had assisted her out of the car.

"We've but little to work on now, Leslie," he said; "to-morrow we'll both know more. Get a good sleep; I'll call you in the morning. Good-night."

CHAPTER FOUR

LESLIE KELVIN was a particularly good sailor, having made the voyage to Paris several times during the past few years, and each morning found her on the promenade deck enjoying to the fullest extent the salt breezes and the beauty of coloring in water and sky. On the fourth day out she came face to face with Frank Arden. Mutual recognition followed, with a surprised exclamation on her part and a pleased greeting on his.

"I had no idea you were sailing on *this* boat!" she said, speaking before she thought.

"You knew I was sailing?" he replied gravely, the interrogation really an affirmation.

She bowed her head. He smiled.

"Paris?" he asked.

"Yes."

Casually he leaned across the railing, half facing her. The girl hesitated when he invited her to pause and talk with him. His comradely smile and obvious desire for her comradeship won the day. For a little while they spoke of the weather, the gulls, a school of flying fish; then he said abruptly:

"It seems strange to me, Miss Kelvin, that so charming a girl should choose your profession."

"My profession?" she fenced.

"Yes. Somehow I've always imagined detectives as men, or if women, at least of the emancipated type."

"Oh!" she colored, "are you just very clever, Mr. Arden, or did Mr. Collingsby give you this information?"

"Say, rather, I wormed it out of him," he laughed. "After all, why can't we be frank with each other? My employer, no doubt, told you it was his wife's psychic nature that compelled him to look into these diamond smuggeries, but he probably neglected to tell you that some time ago I, myself, called his attention to the coincidental arrival of our instruments and the jewels at practically the same time. I was right, he hadn't told you!"

"He did not in any way connect you with the crime," she said quickly.

He smiled.

"I am quite aware of that. I am wondering if in any way I can assist you; if there is, you will not hesitate to call upon me?"

She impulsively placed her hand in his.

"Thanks, you are very kind. I am accustomed to traveling alone and used to rather peculiar situations. However, it will be nice to know I have a friend at hand."

CHAPTER FIVE

AT Cherbourg they parted. Leslie had cabled McFallen of Arden's presence on the boat, and his instructions had been to not antagonize the buyer, but to drop him when

she landed in France. She carefully avoided giving him her Paris address, but Arden, with the keen insight of which she had early seen manifestations, laughingly told her they would meet again at Monsieur Louis Dupres's establishment, that being the house where he was buying his shipment of instruments.

"If anything should occur that we miss each other, Miss Kelvin," he added, "we will unquestionably return upon the same boat, the *Cedric*. Am I right or wrong?"

"I think you are right, Mr. Arden," she answered candidly.

"No doubt you are already aware that the famous Cordoven emerald was purchased by Leroux & Pettit on the Rue De La Paix?"

"Yes," Mr. Arden. Don't you think I would be rather a stupid lady detective if I didn't know that?"

"I beg your pardon."

Two days later a slim, dark-haired girl in a natty, brown-tailored suit presented herself at the office of Monsieur Jean Leroux, senior member of the jewelry firm of Leroux & Pettit. Her card handed with a smile to a small, rather bent old man brought the desired result, and she was ushered into M. Leroux's presence. That gentleman upon seeing her bowed ceremoniously, and in excellent English bade her be seated.

"I am charmed," he said, "though frankly puzzled, mademoiselle, as to the nature of your visit. It must be of some importance to have brought you across the ocean to see me, and yet——" He paused, pursing his small mouth and clapping his hands across a capacious abdomen.

"It is, Monsieur Leroux. I have called to see you regarding the Cordoven emerald which your firm recently purchased from Andrew Cordoven; and which, if all reports are true, is almost invaluable and unbelievably beautiful."

"My dear young lady, I hope you have no desire to purchase it! Already it is sold!"

"Sold! To whom?"

"To one of your countrywomen who for some time has made Paris her home! A Madame Linley; yes, that is the name, Louisa Linley."

"This Mrs. Linley must be a woman of con-

siderable means," said Leslie gravely; "may I ask what she paid you for the stone?"

"In your money sixty thousand dollars," the jeweler replied. "I don't think she was buying it for herself; however, she did not give the impression of being a woman of great wealth, not caring a great deal for bedecking herself in jewels."

"Will you please give me her address and a brief description of her, M. Leroux?"

The jeweler demurred at first.

"It isn't customary to do this, Miss Kelvin; I should like to accommodate you, but——"

Leslie then explained to him in detail her reason for wishing the knowledge, and after some hesitation M. Leroux gave her the woman's address and informed her that as he recalled his customer she was an extremely tall person in her late forties.

"Her hair was iron-gray, if I remember correctly, and she had a slight cast in one eye. I remember this distinctly, for she appeared to be very near-sighted and was compelled to bend closely toward the stone when examining it. She had a splendid knowledge of gems, and purchased two very fine diamonds at the same time. She spoke with a decided American accent, though conversing in French, and was plainly though richly dressed."

"You say she was very tall. How tall? Do you mean tall for a woman, or tall even in comparison with a man?"

"I am tall," he replied; "she was a trifle taller than I. Her voice was rather musical, I remember—a contralto—but she was not an attractive woman; rather, I would say, a trifle repellent."

"Thank you very much, M. Leroux. Leslie thrust the information he had given her, which she had written upon a slip of notepaper, into the velvet bag she carried and rose. "I shall try to meet Mrs. Linley. Oh, yes, one more question. Did she pay you in checks or——"

"Cash," he interrupted. "I was unfamiliar with her and demanded it. There was no hesitancy on her part in acceding to my wishes."

"Thank you again."

Leslie hailed a taxi and gave the driver the address where she wished to go. She discovered that Mrs. Linley's place of residence was an apartment hotel in a semi-fashionable portion of the city, but to her dismay she learned

that two days before the lady had checked out, leaving no forwarding address. The girl's questions as to how long the woman had resided in the hotel, or if she were apt to return, received only vague, unsatisfactory replies, and the young detective left the building with an explosive "damn" on her lips.

"If I fall down on this—and dollars to doughnuts I will—good-night!" she muttered. She felt a great desire to talk over the situation with some one, and was almost tempted to telephone Arden at his hotel and ask him to dine with her.

"That would be a crazy thing to do when he is half under suspicion himself, and yet I ought to get a promise from him to say nothing about me at the instrument place. I'll do it!"

"Will I have dinner with you? You better guess I will!" answered the buyer over the phone when she succeeded in getting him; "where shall I come for you?"

"I'll do the coming!" she laughed; "I'll call for you in an hour! You are my guest!"

CHAPTER SIX

SHE found Arden a charming dinner companion. He seemed to put forth every effort to relieve the situation of all strain and to cause her to forget for the time being the tension which was brought about by her mission. The promise she exacted from him about keeping her secret was given, though, he laughed at her for even desiring such a one.

"You are in Mr. Collingsby's employ, so am I," he said; "it is to our mutual advantage to save the firm any disreputé. I told you on board ship I wanted to help you in any way I could. That holds good. I am yours to command."

"I should like to accompany you to M. Depres's establishment, unless you aren't going again," she said slowly. "I—I am interested in seeing these wonderful instruments you intend buying."

"I shall be glad to take you in the morning. I have made a selection of all the brass horns, but have yet the reed and stringed instruments to purchase."

"I'll be ready at any time you say."

He named an hour when he should call for her, smiling whimsically as she gave him her address, no doubt remembering how carefully she had avoided doing so before.

When they parted, she desiring to drive home alone, she said impulsively with outstretched hand:

"You—you're wonderfully kind. It's been—well, just more than nice to dine with you. I appreciate your generosity."

In a side street, tucked away between buildings two stories higher on either side, was the entrance to Louis Depres's, a modest, most unpretentious-looking shop; several squares distant were the factories and warehouses. The shop consisted of three floors filled with instruments of all kinds for bands and orchestras. Phonograph records, band stands and sheet music cluttered the lower floor; those over it contained violins, cellos, brass horns, clarinets, bassoons, oboes, saxaphones—all in a heterogeneous collection that caused Leslie to wonder how the proprietor and his various clerks were ever able to find anything they desired.

"These may be a lot better than the ones you can get at home," she whispered to her companion after climbing two dusty flights of stairs, "but they don't look it."

"They're a lot cheaper," he chuckled; "yes, and perhaps better. The ones lying out uncovered aren't the instruments I'll buy; they are in cases and carefully protected from dust and grime."

Louis Depres, himself dapper, suave and obliging, piloted them through the place. Leslie's presence with Arden made no impression upon him other than any lovely stranger would have done. She was a customer's friend, maybe wife or sweetheart—that was all; women did not come often, but they were cordially invited.

"M. Trevor was taking care of you yesterday, oui?" inquired the little merchant, carefully pronouncing each word in his desire to use good English. He smiled gratefully when Arden answered him in French.

"Trevor?" queried Leslie in some surprise. "Yes, an Englishman, one of his most efficient salesmen; nice chap, too."

A little later when Trevor himself joined

them, Leslie wondered why she had mentally visualized him as she had. He was a raw-boned, rather tall man, with flaming red hair, a long, determined jaw, and reddish-brown eyes. She had fancied that he would be older and grayish, maybe slender. His manner was pleasant, courteous, affable; he showed a deference to her that proclaimed him a gentleman, but, contrary to Arden's predictions, she did not like him. Once she imagined he was staring at her over the top of a monstrous saxophone which he was showing Arden, with a hint of suspicion in his eyes; then she decided she was, as she phrased it, "getting hipped on the subject," and that it was the nose glasses he wore that gave him that expression.

She admired the way Arden went about his purchase; the manner in which he examined this reed and that, the keys to each instrument, the tone, the quality of the metal of which they were made. She found the high polish, the gloss and lustre of them fascinating. As he discarded this clarinet, laid aside another saxophone, she found herself intent on the expressions of his homely but intelligent face. It was not until he had drawn up close beside her, practically touching elbows with her, that she became aware of another's presence; one who also seemed impressed by Arden's selections.

This man was a tall, rather slight individual, somewhat younger than Trevor, but so alike him in appearance as to instantly proclaim his relationship. A trifle younger, perhaps, with the same reddish-brown eyes, but not so conservative in dress as the older man's, yet not exactly sporty. He had a wide, infectious grin that displayed both rows of rather large but well-cared-for white teeth, and as he leaned across the counter the salesman greeted him with:

"Lo, Phil!"

"Cheerio!" answered the other.

"My brother," said Trevor; "you'll probably be passengers together if you are returning on the *Cedric*, as I was informed you were."

"Going to America?" Arden inquired of the younger red-haired man.

"Yes. Thought I'd run over." He flicked a cigarette case from his pocket and extended it to the buyer, who shook his head.

Leslie suddenly thrust out her hand.

"I will," she laughed, "if I may."

"Oh, pardon me."

As she drew the cigarette from the case and placed it between her lips, he lighted a match; for the brief instant that the flame touched the weed their eyes met; the girl had a vague, unpleasant sensation sweep over her as she noticed a decided cast in one eye. She edged closer to him in a half-confidential, almost coquettish manner which was at variance with the treatment she had always accorded Arden.

"Have you been in America before, Mr. Trevor?" she inquired, waving the smoke aside.

"Oh, yes, went to school at Harvard for a couple of years; then the pater failed and I had to return to England. Rather like little old Paris, though!" he laughed.

"Harvard! Fancy!" she laughed. "I had a cousin in Harvard. What year were you there, Mr. Trevor? Maybe we have some mutual acquaintances!"

Arden gazed at her in astonishment. The girl's complete capitulation to the young Englishman's winning personality annoyed him. He had thought her above petty flirtation with passing strangers. Once outside the music house, he said words to that effect.

Leslie laughed gaily, and as his scowl deepened she placed her hand in a half-caressing gesture on his arm.

"You are rather a dear, you know, Mr. Arden; one would even think you were jealous! Don't you realize why I am in Paris, what my profession is?"

"You don't suspect that asinine young cub?" he sputtered.

"I must suspect everything and everybody," she replied.

"Even me?"

"Even you. Tell me, where are these instruments packed? How are they shipped, where from and so forth?"

His face clearing, he gave her the desired information.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THERE followed several glorious days of sightseeing with a companion of great congeniality and consideration. Leslie would

have been supremely happy but for the knowledge of the failure in performing the task McFallen had assigned her. Sometimes a vague suspicion that Arden was making everything so pleasant for her because of some ulterior motive would flash through her mind; then she would meet the frank, good-natured stare in his homely face and thrust the suspicion from her as a guilty thing.

Try as she would she could find no trace of the American woman who had purchased the emerald. There was no record of her having sailed to the States, nor of having left France. Yet Leslie was certain she was not in Paris.

It was a heavy-hearted, disappointed girl who took passage on the *Cedric* for her return trip. As Arden with his shipment of instruments was on that boat, she was compelled to go on it, too; her instructions had been to accompany the instruments, and even though she felt a heavy sense of failure she could not do otherwise than follow McFallen's instructions.

The Banda Rosario, a large musical organization, on its way to the States for a series of concerts, was also aboard ship. Leslie met the leader and owner, an American in spite of the name he had adopted for business purposes. His musicians, however, were of the most part French and Italian, voluble, loquacious little men, chattering amongst themselves, ogling the women on deck with no attempt at becoming acquainted, or making discordant noises on their horns, clarinets or flutes as they practiced or tuned their instruments with no regard for the nerves of other passengers.

To Leslie they were a source of interest. She was passionately fond of music, and it puzzled her to find its exponents such an ordinary class of men; she wanted lofty brows and beautiful souls in connection with it. Arden laughed at her and told her she should not judge by surfaces, naming several men with gross bodies who had been geniuses.

One of the musicians particularly interested her because he was lithe and slim and extremely young, not more than twenty, with a shock of pale yellow hair, an almost pallid face, spiritual in expression, though listless in repose. He played a saxophone.

"He should be a violinist!" she laughed.

One day she spoke to him; he answered her

shyly, but did not encourage conversation; turning away from him, she came face to face with Philip Trevor, the young red-haired Englishman she had met at M. Dupres's in Paris.

"This is jolly!" he exclaimed jovially as the girl extended her hand. "I fancied perhaps you were on board, but deuce take me if I hadn't forgotten your name." His red-brown eyes sparkled, but again the unpleasant shiver shook the girl, and as quickly as she could she withdrew her hand.

Arden took no pains to hide his annoyance when he learned of Trevor's presence, and with true feminine perversity Leslie set about to cultivate the Englishman's society.

He proved to be an exceptionally good dancer, a facile talker, and rather more than entertaining. Arden proceeded to sulk.

The climax to their relations came as a denouement that was most startling. As is customary on all boats, artists and musicians allied in giving theatrical entertainments for the benefits of the other passengers. One night the Banda Rosario was prevailed upon to give a concert. There had been a brief argument before the leader complied with the request, but when Leslie added her pleas with the others he did so. At the last moment, however, the young saxophone player, the pallid youth with the blond hair, discovered there was something radically wrong with his baritone saxophone; none other belonging to any of his companions suited his needs.

Leslie was standing close beside him at the time and, overhearing his remark, turned to Arden, who happened to be her companion, and said: "You've some baritone saxaphones among your shipment, haven't you?"

"Certainly."

"Why not lend him one?"

Arden demurred at this, explaining that the box containing the saxaphones would have to be broken open, necessitating considerable labor—reboxed, etc. But the young musician, instantly becoming an eager listener to the conversation, begged that Arden would lend him an instrument, saying also that he would like to see the ones in the buyer's possession.

With rather bad grace, it seemed to Leslie, Arden acceded to his wish. The box was opened, and the instruments produced.

The musician, whose name was Emil Tor-

quad, went into raptures over the beauty exposed, and insisted on trying several before his choice fell upon a certain silver-plated gold-lined instrument.

Arden stood by scowling as he examined one after another. Leslie watched the boy in fascination.

As his lips fitted over the reed and his fingers ran deftly over the keys, he suddenly hesitated and glanced up in surprise at the buyer.

"Zar ees somezing wrong," he said in bewilderment, "somezing——" Before the astonished girl could speak he lifted one of the larger padded keys and glanced into the little pocket-like vacancy. "Why, look!" he gasped.

Leslie knew instantly what he had found even before he lifted the glittering green crystal from its snug hiding-place, hidden so carefully away that no one but a musician would even have discovered it. She knew it was the Cordoven emerald. Arden's exclamation of "Good God!" caused her to swing about and face him. His face was ashen.

"The emerald!" she whispered. "Look, there's something else!"

Young Torquad lifted the other pad. Two diamonds, blue-white, scintillating and of several carats each, were drawn out by his slender fingers. He glanced first at the girl detective, then at the grim-faced, badly shaken man beside her, and extended the jewels toward her.

In silence Leslie weighed them in the palm of her hand, her eyes never leaving Arden's face. Then she said gravely to the young musician:

"Thank you; do not mention this to any one."

The youth bowed, replaced the instrument, and without picking up another one, moved away.

Arden returned her steady gaze; his lips quivered as he spoke. "It was a ruse—his broken instrument?" he asked.

"Yes, I explained my mission to him; he told me it was possible to smuggle gems in this way, showed me the open space under the keys, and when I asked him to help me he did so. My hunch was correct. Here they are!"

"By God!" said Arden huskily. "It's gigantic!" Then suddenly he caught the girl's wrist

with a vise-like grasp that caused her to wince. "You don't think I knew anything about this, do you?"

She laughed.

"I'm sure you didn't," she replied, "but in return for my confidence you must give me your word to say nothing about this. No one must know what we have found. It's one thing to have the smuggled jewels in our possession, quite another to find out to whom they belong and where they are going!"

"But don't you see," he expostulated, "these instruments are going to Collingsby & Collingsby; some one connected with the firm must know that the jewels are secreted in them."

"Not necessarily," she answered. "Any one knowing the emerald's destination could see that the right instrument was purchased and thus the gem find its owner. It's our task now to watch every purchaser of saxophones who enters your place of business. Now I must swear my young musician to secrecy."

CHAPTER EIGHT

WHEN Leslie Kelvin, accompanied by McFallen, entered the establishment of Collingsby & Collingsby some days later, Frank Arden was the first to greet them. The jewels, which Leslie had turned over to the Federal authorities until the rightful owner showed up and the duty was paid, had for the time being been loaned to McFallen for his purpose.

Arden's greeting to the girl was more than cordial, but before other than a brief "How do you do?" could be exchanged Mr. Collingsby himself joined them, and the buyer moved away, while McFallen and his young assistant followed the old gentleman into his inner office.

Leslie was surprised to see Audrey Olliphant sitting before a roll-top desk; though aware that young Collingsby's fiancée was in his father's employ, she somehow had not fancied she took dictation or did typing.

Miss Olliphant rose abruptly as they entered, but Mr. Collingsby waved her to be seated.

"It's all right, Audrey," he said quietly. "I imagine that whatever Miss Kelvin or Mr. McFallen has to say can be said in your presence."

Leslie wanted to protest, but when McFallen kept silent she did likewise. She seated herself with her back to the window. The full morning light fell obliquely upon the red hair of Collingsby's sweetheart, making a golden aureole about her thin face and plainly outlining a few indistinct lines about her mouth and eyes. Leslie sensed a vague resemblance to some one, but momentarily could not place that resemblance.

After Collingsby had seated himself McFallen reached into his pocket and drew forth a small leather bag. "Mr. Collingsby," he said dryly, "your wife's hunch, or whatever you call it, was absolutely correct."

"You—you——" The old importer leaned forward, his eyes lighting with excitement. "You have found out something?"

"Miss Kelvin found the Cordoven emerald in one of the saxaphones you purchased, together with two diamonds!" He opened the bag and dropped it on the table.

The old man gave a gasp of astonishment, but his exclamation was lost in the startled cry which escaped the lips of the red-haired girl who rose to her feet ashen and trembling, then sank back again in a faint. At that moment Leslie knew whom it was she resembled. The likeness between her and Philip Trevor, the younger Englishman, was startling, and as the girl realized this the whole plot and its inner workings were revealed to her. She caught McFallen's hand, and while the startled, utterly amazed importer was doing his best to revive Miss Olliphant she pulled her employer out of the office into an anteroom.

CHAPTER NINE

WHEN Miss Olliphant had fainted Collingsby had summoned one of his women employees to come to her assistance, and as the two detectives stepped outside they almost collided with this girl and Arden, who had come out to see what had taken place. Leslie reached out her hand when she saw the buyer,

and the three of them moved aside a little while the girl explained in excited whispers what it was she had learned.

"It could be, you know," she gasped. "There is no question but that Miss Olliphant is the receiver of the smuggled jewels, even if she doesn't actually dispose of them herself. She has some one here to do it for her, or she is in the employ of some one who does. Obviously her position with Mr. Collingsby is merely a blind, and if there is no relation between her and Philip Trevor there is certainly a most remarkable resemblance."

"You are right!" exclaimed Arden, staring at Leslie's flushed, excited young face with unbounded admiration. "Looking back, Trevor had every opportunity to get at the musical instruments. An examination of a saxaphone with a quick wrist movement would serve to hide the jewels and no one be the wiser; now I am almost positive that was the reason of his being in Dupres's establishment; perhaps his brother also——"

"No," Leslie shook her head. "I don't think so. It's the younger man and the girl."

"It's almost unbelievable," said Arden, frowning, his homely, kind-looking face darkened by the scowl that knitted his heavy brows together. "Miss Olliphant is young Collingsby's fiancée, his—— By George, it's a devilish situation, and what about the Linley woman who bought the emerald from Leroux & Pettit in Paris?"

McFallen, who had been silent for a few moments, moved his heavy body ponderously, shifting from one foot to the other; at the little laugh which tinkled between Leslie's parted lips he looked inquiringly at her. She addressed him.

"Don't you see, Tim, young Trevor and Mrs. Linley, the American purchaser of the emerald, are one and the same person? The whole thing is so simple I'm astonished that I didn't realize it before. Mr. Trevor has a cast in one eye; Mrs. Linley had a cast in one eye. He is slender, though tall. Mrs. Linley was an exceptionally tall woman. Trevor has been in America several times, and could easily assume an American accent. The gray wig was clever—very clever. A wig of another color would have been much more noticeable, also the pretense of being an elderly woman

so——" She spread her slim white hands out before her with a quaint little gesture and smiled at McFallen for confirmation of her statement.

"Very pretty, Miss Kelvin," he answered in a half-mocking voice, "but who furnished the money for the purchase of these jewels? Can you tell me that? And if the younger Trevor were the smuggler, wouldn't his older brother's employer become suspicious of his constant visits there?"

"No," she answered; "that's for you to discover. But I'll bet you anything you like that Philip Trevor shows up here, or that Miss Olliphant meets him some place outside unless she manages to telephone him without our knowledge."

CHAPTER TEN

A VERY shaken old man joined them a moment later.

"Mr. McFallen!" he said in a hoarse whisper, "Miss Olliphant, she——"

"I know," interrupted the detective grimly. "Has she confessed?"

Collingsby shook his head.

"No—I—she wants to talk to you. Please come with me."

The girl was hysterical. Evidently knowing that she had irrevocably given away her guilty secret, she was determined to make the best of it and clear herself to the best of her ability. She began to cry softly when she saw McFallen's grim face; she wrung her hands, all the while pacing the short length of office space.

"Well?" said McFallen.

"I knew they were there!" she sobbed. "I—it was so easy—I never dreamed they'd be discovered—they never were before, you know—and—we were so poor—we only intended to do it this last time—it meant so much to us, this money—a chance for Harry to finish school, for me to—it was a fortune to us—a——"

"Harry?" said McFallen quietly.

"My younger brother. I am English, you know; I've lived in Canada, but——"

"So Harry was in on this with you?"

"No, no! Oh, no!" she cried, "he doesn't know a thing about it! Before God, he doesn't; he——"

"Then who do you mean by we?" McFallen leaned toward her.

"I thought you knew—my brother Phil—the clerk at Dupres's and——"

Leslie gave an exclamation.

"Good Lordie! Then—then it was he who impersonated the woman?"

"Yes." The girl covered her face with her hands, sobbing wildly. "I didn't know it would seem so dreadful to be discovered! Somehow it didn't seem like a crime, like stealing or anything that way, though—though at first I didn't want to do it; neither did Phil; then—it was so easy."

"Who employed you?" McFallen's voice rasped as he spat out the words.

"Employed me?" The girl raised red-brown eyes to him and ceased her sobbing with a frightened gasp. "Why—why—I—I——"

"No lies," said the detective; "it took money, a great deal of money, to finance a thing like this. Who furnished the capital? Your brother in France impersonates a woman, purchases the stones, smuggles them through his connection with Louis Dupres's instrument house. You secure them by removing them from the instruments, possibly dispose of them yourself, but who backed you? Who financed the scheme?"

Collingsby seemed to hold his breath. His glance fluttered from the red face of the catechising detective to the pallid girl, then toward Leslie and his buyer. He swayed.

"Must I tell?" Audrey Olliphant wailed. "What will they do to us? Will they send us to prison if the duty is paid? Can't we pay it? Can't something be done?" She became hysterical again.

The door opened and Eugene Collingsby stepped in. He was humming a popular air that ceased abruptly as the tense attitudes and taut faces of the group became apparent.

"Gene!" cried his fiancée. "Gene!"

He showed his consternation at her tears; then as McFallen quietly placed the jewels upon the desk before him he staggered back as though struck in the face.

"Good God!" he muttered. "They've got us!"

"My boy! No!" Collingsby clutched at air and crumpled up as he fell forward in his seat.

"Poor old codger," murmured Arden. "He never dreamed that Eugene was behind the scheme; I was afraid of it, but hoped it wasn't so."

CHAPTER ELEVEN

A WEEK later, sitting in her cozy little studio, gowned in a becoming frock of orange-tinted chiffon and lace, Leslie poured tea for her visitor while she smiled frankly into his flushed face.

"It cost Mr. Collingsby a great deal of money, didn't it?" she asked. "But I'm glad they did nothing to his boy. Are he and Miss Olliphant going to be married soon?"

"They were married yesterday," Arden replied, taking the cup from her hand. "After all, she was only a tool, so was her brother, and it's a queer thing how most women look upon smuggling, anyway. Eugene has been rather a trial to his father since he came out of school. I'm hoping this affair and his marriage will make him go straight from now on."

"I think it will," said Leslie softly. "He didn't look such a bad sort, just idle and luxury-loving." She stirred her tea thoughtfully,

staring at the glowing embers in the fireplace before her.

"What shall you do now?" Arden asked suddenly.

"I—— Oh, Mr. McFallen will have another case for me soon; something thrilling, I hope."

"Can't you give it up? Couldn't you be persuaded? Leslie, I love you. I——" He leaned eagerly toward her.

She drew back with a half-embarrassed laugh.

"Frank, you're a darling, and I'm really crazy about you, but please don't ask me to marry you; not yet, anyway; wait—let's say—a year!"

"Now, dearest!"

"Well, six months; then maybe—— Who knows I might say yes. You see, I love my work, and I've only just begun. I want some more adventures before I settle down, but—I just couldn't bear to say no."

He laughed happily, and before she was aware of it he had her in his arms.

"Six months then," he whispered with his lips buried in the fragrance of her dusky hair, "but you're mine, darling, even if I haven't asked you and you haven't said yes!"

Send us a one-cent stamp to cover postage, and we will mail you a copy of "Moving Picture Stories."

FISH RID GUAYAQUIL OF MOSQUITOES

BY placing fish in the water tanks, cisterns, barrels, etc., at Guayaquil, 30,000 of the water receptacles were freed from the larvae of mosquitoes in a very short time and with very little expense, writes Dr. M. E. Connor in the *Gaceta Medica* (Mexico). The *stegomyia* might be called almost a domestic mosquito, he says, as it breeds in or near human dwellings, scarcely ever in marshes. Experiments with two minnows showed that they eat the larvae only when the water is free from organic matter, which they prefer to the larvae.

The fish used are a species called chalaco. These are placed in the well, the conditions of

which are like those in the streams from which they were taken. After a few days they are transferred to a second well of the city water, and no further food is given them. One or more of the fishes is placed in each tank, regardless of the presence or absence of larvae in the water at the time. The press and the sanitary inspectors have educated the public to protect the fish, and many families still have the same fish that was given them about eighteen months ago when the anti-mosquito campaign began. The value of the chalaco is evident from the fact that the *stegomyia* mosquitoes have been reduced to less than 2 per cent.

Our Mysterious Boarder

IT would be hard to find a more quiet, dull, out-of-the-way little village than Rawdon.

I was a detective's wife and took up my abode there in a large, rambling farmhouse, open for three months every year to summer visitors. There was a party of nine, who had had full possession of the farmhouse for several years, for the three summer months, and we rather resented the invasion when, one morning, Mrs. Deane informed us that she had rented her one vacant room to an invalid widow, who had stipulated to have her meals in her room.

When the invalid widow arrived we watched her into her room with the natural curiosity of the occasion, and discussed what could be seen of her as we plied our needles, rocking-chairs and tongues. Presently Mrs. Deane came back to us.

"Ah, poor thing!" she said pityingly; "she is very weak, and has had a long illness. All her hair has been cut off, and is in a little close crop, like a boy's; and she has lost her voice entirely—can't speak above a whisper. She is lying down, and I'm going to take her a cup of tea."

Some expressions of sympathy were exchanged, and then we discussed the latest fashions.

Amongst the letters that morning was one from my husband, who is a detective, and gave me the particulars of a great bank robbery, and his own share in the work of tracking the thieves.

"The man I am after," he wrote, "is Day. There is strong evidence against him, and it is probable that he has most of the missing bonds, money and valuables with him."

I took up the newspapers, of which John always sent me an ample supply wherever I might be, and read the account of the robbery; and then, as usual, my mind went over all the dangers to John, not comforted one bit by the possibility that he might secure the reward

offered by the bank for the capture of the thieves.

It may be that my mind has been influenced by John's business, and that for that reason I can never come near a mystery without trying to solve it.

Now the widow was a mystery to me. My room was directly over hers, which was a small one on the first floor, that had never been used as a bedroom before, and opened into the garden on one side.

The first circumstance that attracted my attention was that the delicate invalid, who dared not risk the soft summer air in the daytime, was in the habit of stealing out of her room after the family had retired, and walking for hours in the night, sometimes in the garden, pacing up and down, sometimes going out at the gate, only to return hours later, and enter the house most cautiously, but not so softly that I did not hear her.

Another curious fact was that the trays of food carried to her room might have satisfied the appetite of a plowman; and yet more than once I knew that Mrs. Deane took up a second supply.

Once watching, I also discovered that the widow had a heavy step and a long stride in walking, more like a soldier than an invalid lady.

Each day I became more convinced that the seclusion of our new boarder was not caused by ill health alone; but my utmost endeavors could not secure a glimpse of her face. Her curtains were always down, and she had been three weeks in the house without once crossing the sill of the door leading into the hall, while in her nocturnal rambles she wore her veil closely drawn.

But one day, when July was half gone, there was a picnic of all the visitors, who went away at unearthly morning hours in a great hay wagon, and were not to return until evening. At the last minute I decided to remain

at home; but Mrs. Deane, finding my door fastened, thought I had gone with the rest.

Many times I had heard her voice in Mrs. Churchill's room, though the whispered answer was lost to me; but on that day I listened eagerly as she urged the invalid to sit for an hour upon the porch.

And the widow consented, and a little while after Mrs. Deane left her to go to a neighbor for some butter.

When she was gone I stole upon slippered feet to the parlor. From one window, quite unseen myself, I watched the widow. For the first time I saw her face, a pale, strong-featured countenance, with closely curling brown hair, not unattractive in a masculine style. Her hands, large and white, lay upon her lap, in constant motion, twisting a large, seal ring, plaiting the fringe of her shawl, pushing back her hair occasionally; but never still. She rocked to and fro, with a short, jerky motion, eloquent of nervousness.

Suddenly she spoke, to the air, the roses, the flies, to me, though she did not know that, and in a rich, deep voice, said, with an oath, "I've half a mind to risk it."

Then, as if the sound of her voice scared her, she looked around her. Nothing terrifying was in sight, and, throwing off her shawl, she went to her own room through the door that opened upon the porch. Two minutes later she was back again, smoking a cigar.

I sped upstairs, put on my hat, stole down to the kitchen, out of the back door and across to Mr. Cowley's, a farmer. Half an hour later I was on my way to the railway station as fast as Mr. Cowley's best horse could carry me.

A telegram to John was dispatched, and he came as fast as steam would bring him, and no one expected him when he drove up and brought two quiet-looking gentlemen to Mrs. Deane's.

"Now, then," John said, when we were alone, "where is Day?"

"Have you a photograph?"

One was given me.

"Yes," I said; "it is the same face, without the beard or mustache."

And I told John all I knew about our mysterious boarder.

There was no noise made. Early in the morning a close carriage drove up to Mrs. Deane's gate, and the widow was roused from her morning nap before she could secure her pistol. Very quietly three men walked down the garden path to the gate, and the driver of the carriage was sent back for the trunk, in which was found the stolen property.

John bought me the prettiest cottage with the reward.

Send us a one-cent stamp to cover postage, and we will mail you a copy of "Moving Picture Stories."

NEW WONDER CHAMBER IN MAMMOTH CAVE

DISCOVERY of a two and a half mile unexplored avenue of wonderful beauty in Mammoth Cave, Kentucky's great natural wonder, has just been made by Carl T. Robertson, Cleveland naturalist and author, who recently visited the famous cave, according to a reliable report.

In company with Schuyler Hunt, veteran guide, the naturalist ventured off of beaten paths in the cave and the discovery of the new avenue came as an accident.

A stir was created by the naturalist's story, and as a result a searching party was organized to explore the avenue thoroughly, and also

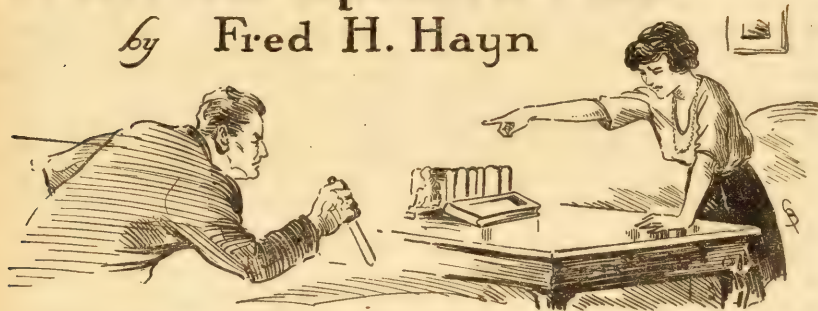
two big side avenues which Robertson had noted.

"As a pleasing contrast to the atrociously rough paths we had been traveling for hours," the naturalist said, "the new avenue was as smooth as a dancing floor, but covered with from one to three inches of the finest limestone sand.

About two hundred feet from the entrance we came to a fairy fountain, a stream of water dropped from an invisible crevice in the roof to an almost circular bowl, six or seven feet in diameter, in a ledge about shoulder high above a natural pathway."

With the Spider's Aid

by Fred H. Hayn



DUNCAN HALL was thronged with eager, impatient humanity. Mlle. Cole was scheduled to deliver a lecture on hypnotism, illustrating her talk by an actual demonstration upon a subject. Male hypnotists many had seen before, but one of the opposite sex was a distinct novelty; hence the great crowd.

Fully twenty minutes elapsed after the time announced for the beginning of the lecture, but Mlle. Cole did not appear. Sporadic applause here and there throughout the hall indicated the impatience of the audience. Presently, however, a dainty little woman stepped forward to receive an ovation.

In a clear, musical voice the magnetic speaker soon captured her audience as she explained the principles of hypnotism and its physiological effects. She told them that hypnotism, or mesmerism as it often was called, dated back to remote antiquity, that it was an art well recognized among many peoples.

Hypnotism, the lecturer declared, was of three kinds; lethargic, cataleptic, and somnambulistic, producing light and very hypnotic sleep. In detail she explained the physiological effects of the hypnotic state, the change of pulse and respiration, the increased insensibility to painful stimuli, the audience listening, entranced. Most people, she said, were amenable to hypnotic influences, but, on the other hand, many at will could resist successfully any at-

tempt to hypnotize them. There were those, however, who, try as they might, could not resist the influence of the hypnotizer.

"With your permission, ladies and gentlemen," she announced, "I shall show you such a subject."

In response to her call a short, well-developed man in flesh-tinted tights and wearing a black mask slowly walked toward her. Silence reigned supreme as, with her eyes close to his, the lecturer stared into those of her subject for a full minute. Presently a gasp, followed by a convulsive shudder, and he stood rigid.

Then followed the demonstration. A quick movement and Mlle. Cole dislocated the man's shoulders—a very painful performance. But the subject gave no indication of any discomfort. A large darning-needle was thrust through his arm, and not the slightest whimper escaped from the man in tights. Then the lecturer requested three heavily built men to step on the stage.

Two chairs were brought, and the rigid subject was placed on them, his head resting on the arm of one, his feet on the other. The three volunteers thereupon sat upon the stiffened form, but were unable to make any impression on it. Further experiments were performed, and finally the lecturer, by slapping his body, blowing into his face, and giving stern commands, brought her subject out of

the cataleptic state. Tumultuous applause greeted Mlle. Cole at the conclusion of her lecture.

Just as Mlle. Cole was about to enter her dressing-room she was seized from behind; a pair of hands encircled her neck. Consciousness was fast leaving her when she heard a dull thud and some one ask: "Are you all right, Mlle. Cole?"

She opened her eyes. A gasp of surprise escaped her when she observed a rather good-looking young man in his deep twenties looking intently at her. "I came just in time," he smiled, looking at the prostrate masked form. "A moment more and he would have choked you into insensibility."

Mlle. Cole started at sight of the newcomer's blue trousers and the glitter of a badge the lapel of his coat could not conceal. "Oh, yes," displaying a row of teeth, as even and perfectly matched as a set of oriental pearls. "I should have known better. Sometimes there are after effects from—" Noting that her subject was recovering from the blow the detective had given him, she fixed her wonderful eyes on the limp form. "Rise," she ordered. "Go to your dressing-room; clothe yourself, but do not remove your mask. It is my will."

The man meekly obeyed. Mlle. Cole then turned to the detective. "Thank you," she murmured. "Can I be of any service?"

"I just came to make your acquaintance and congratulate you."

"But you must permit me to repay you in some way."

"You can do that very easily."

"Indeed? How?"

"Let me call."

Mlle. Cole started, a frown spreading over her pretty face. The young man stood helplessly under her gaze. It seemed as though her eyes penetrated to his very soul. Gradually her face cleared. "Very well," she shrugged. "I'm staying at the Cromwell apartments; I shall be at liberty to-morrow night after eight. May I ask to whom I'm indebted?"

He handed her a card.

"Ah!" she breathed. "Detective Thurot! Well, sir, I have a poor opinion of you police. From the number of burglaries committed during the past year I would say——"

"Don't rub it in, Mlle. Cole," he interrupted gravely. "We're doing the best we can. Even now I'm working on a clue. Major Kruger is on the job night and day to round up the criminals."

"Well," she smiled, holding out her hand, "I hope your—er—clue will lead you to success." He fancied there was an element of sarcasm in her tone. "And thank you so much for your aid. Good-by."

Promptly at eight the following evening Detective Thurot was shown into Mlle. Cole's sumptuous apartment. He stood speechless as she entered the room. Her ebony eyes, raven-black hair, in which sparkled a diamond-studded pin, and her bespangled black dress, formed a sharp contrast with the snowy whiteness of her skin; never before had he beheld so beautiful, so charming a woman.

He sat spellbound as she led the conversation, which presently turned to the burglaries of the past year. "Was your quest successful after your—er—clue?" she asked.

"I've made some progress. My suspicions have been verified."

"Indeed? That's progress with a will. Have you caught the rascals?"

He smiled. "There is only one."

"Only one! How do you know?"

"There is only one who could have rifled the safes of the police captains successfully; no other would have the nerve."

"You mean to say the safes of the police captains have been robbed! When, pray, did that happen?"

"This afternoon, under their very noses. I can't help but admire the audacity and effrontery of the performance."

"But whom do you suspect?"

The detective hesitated. "If course, you know, Mlle. Cole, we——"

"Oh, by all means keep it secret. I wouldn't embarrass you to that extent. It was merely an idle interest on my part."

"I don't mind telling you. It's a crook who goes by the name of Spider."

"Spider! What an odd name! Why don't you arrest him?"

"For the simple reason that he can't be found. We've scoured the town for him; we've rounded up all his old haunts, but he seems to have vanished completely."

"The police are very efficient!"

"Don't blame all of us. There is more behind all of this than you imagine. I'm sick of the whole business. Sometimes I feel like chucking my job."

"You surprise me. Don't you like the police force?"

"Most of the men are all right, but the major—"

"The major! What have you against him?"

"I suppose I ought not say anything, but I've seen so many things. One incident especially—it happened a number of years ago—when an innocent girl was railroaded to jail."

"How dreadful! Then you think—"

"I'm quite certain it was Kruger's fault. He was a captain then. The girl—Madge Fuller was her name, a pretty, sad-eyed little thing—was accused of—well, it's an unpleasant tale; the details are too distasteful to tell. But I'm convinced Kruger was responsible for her conviction on manufactured evidence. But if she's still alive—most of them never survive such an ordeal—she'll presently have her revenge."

"How's that?"

"Major Kruger will be broken, reduced to the ranks, if not dismissed outright, or even worse! The last coup of the Spider's has put the finishing touches to his career. To-morrow the papers will be full of it, and plenty of other things! How long he'll be able to hang on after that is problematical, but the end is sure."

The detective left a short time later, asking permission to call again, which Mlle. Cole readily gave. A few moments after his departure she straightened up, her face became stern, her eyes alight with triumph. "At last!" she murmured. "At last!"

Moving to the mantelpiece, she tweaked the nose of the little cherub on the right pillar, and the entire mantel noiselessly swung outward. Slipping through the opening, she passed into a well-furnished room, the mantel closing softly after her.

The room in which Mlle. Cole found herself was lighted solely by a cluster of bulbs projecting from the ceiling. The place was ventilated by a hole covered with an iron grating. To the right a door opened to a tiny tiled bathroom, also lighted from the ceiling. On a

small table in the centre of the larger room was a tray bearing the remnants of a meal. In the left corner stood a brass bed, on which lay a man, short and small-boned, yet withal wiry and well knit. His clean-shaven face was the replica of those found in the Rogues' Gallery of the average police headquarters. He lay rigid, his eyes open and staring.

Mlle. Cole looked fixedly at him. "Edward," she commanded, stretching out her hand, "you may awake."

A remarkable change came over the man. A convulsive shudder and he sprang up, his evil face distorted with rage. "When are you goin' to let up on me, you she-devil!" he snarled. "I'm sick an' tired of being caged like a wild animal!"

"There, there, Edward," she soothed. "If you don't behave I'll be forced to put you to sleep again. You've been very comfortable here. Your food is the best; you have everything."

"But liberty!" glaring at her with all the venom his rat-like eyes could eject. "I want to get out of this."

"If I were to let you out, you'd only be arrested, my genial Spider! Even now the police are hunting high and low for you."

"The police! Bah! They ain't got nothing on me. A bunch of fat-heads! I'll take my chances with them any day!"

"I'm sorry, Sir Spider, but you'll have to wait here until—"

She got no farther, for at that moment the Spider pounced upon her and bore her to the floor. Without her knowing it, he had surreptitiously seized a sharp knife from the table and made the attack. She grabbed his wrist in a viselike grip, at the same time desperately wriggling her face free from his body. "Edward," she commanded sharply, her eyes aflame, "sleep! It is my will." The knife dropped and the Spider lay limp.

"No more knives!" she muttered, rising stiffly. Taking up the tray, she walked to the wall. After feeling about for a moment, she pressed a cleverly hidden button. The secret door opened and she passed out.

After disposing of the tray, she noticed with dismay that her hand was covered with blood. The wound, however, was not serious. She washed her hand and applied a piece of plas-

ter. Then, going to the mantel, she fixed her eyes on it. "Edward," she commanded, "awake. It is my will."

Her face radiant, she crossed to a small desk, unlocked it by means of one of the small keys suspended from her neck, and took out a tin box. This she opened with another key. The box was filled with papers, evidently written in cipher. "I must see that the innocent do not suffer with the guilty," she murmured. "I must return everything."

Mlle. Cole pored over the papers for over an hour, making frequent annotations. When she had finished it was past twelve. Nevertheless she put on her wraps and went out. When she returned a frown darkened her face as she looked at the desk. In an agony of fear she opened the drawer, which had been forced. The tin box was gone! Rushing to the mantel, she opened it. The room was empty; the Spider had disappeared!

Frantically she examined the wall. In an instant all was clear to her. A bloody fingerprint had disclosed to the Spider the exact location of the hidden button. Dashing through the secret door, she picked up the telephone. "This is Mlle. Cole," she said, after she had received the desired number. "Have my car at the door at once. No, I shall go alone."

Ten minutes later, at the wheel of the car, she sped through the deserted streets. In imagination she could see the fat, clean-shaven, watery-eyed Major Kruger, his scant gray hair parted in the middle. She could see the fiendish joy on his face as the Spider produced the tin box with its telltale papers. She seemed to hear the Spider's story of oppression—how she had hypnotized him and forced him to rob and steal for her. She could see the chief gloat as he pried open the box. Her eyes gleamed at his look of disappointment when he noted that the papers were in cipher. But she knew that would prove no bar to his learning their contents, provided he was allowed to retain them, and this was what she was going to prevent.

As the car neared headquarters she concentrated her entire will power on the Spider. "Edward!" she commanded, stopping the car in front of the building. "Sleep! It is my will! Go at once to my apartment, turn the nose of the little cherub on the right side of

the mantel, enter the room and lie on the bed. It is—my—will!"

A minute passed, another; they seemed hours. And then, praises be! the door opened, and out walked the Spider; as though in a trance he moved off down the street.

Stepping from the car, she entered the building and approached the officer at the desk. A few words and she was shown into the sanctum of the chief of police.

Kruger was bending over the tin box as she entered. He gave a gasp of surprise when he looked up and saw the visitor. He closed the box with a snap.

"Well, madam," he asked blandly, "and why do you come to me at this hour?"

Mlle. Cole handed him a card.

Kruger gave a gasp. "Aha! Mazie Cole!" A look of joy lighted up his dissipated face.

"I beg your pardon, sir," she said coldly. "But that is only part of my name."

"Hm!" he grunted. "I'm not interested in your name or part of it. It's you I want! Well, lady," thrusting his thumbs into the armholes of his vest, "aren't you rather rash to place yourself in my power this way?"

Mlle. Cole walked close to him. "And do you really believe I am in your power?"

Kruger gasped.

"So you're not interested in my whole name! Possibly you will change your mind when you learn it. I have changed, I know. It took years, patience and an operation. But you'll recognize my name. It is Madge Mazie Fuller."

"Good God!" Kruger collapsed in his chair. But he recovered momentarily and reached forward to press the button on his desk. He hastily drew back his hand, however, when a pistol was thrust under his nose.

"One move and I'll send you where I've intended sending you all these years! Oh, yes! I wouldn't have the slightest compunction! Stand up, you fiend! Hands high over your head!" Snatching a pair of scissors from the desk, she snapped the wires leading to his push button. "Now, you viper, bite if you can!"

"Don't forget I have your tool!" Kruger emitted through his teeth.

Mlle. Cole turned on him like a flash. "Oh,

you have, have you! I wish you joy! My compliments, you thick-necked limb of Satan! To-morrow I'll have my revenge." Picking up the box, she backed out of the room. A few moments later she whirled off in her car.

The following evening, immaculately clothed in evening dress, Detective Thurot was shown into Mlle. Cole's apartment.

"I came to-night to ask you to marry me," he said.

Mlle. Cole opened wide her eyes. "Isn't this—er—rather sudden?"

"Hardly. I've been in love with you——"

"Two whole days!"

"Don't you believe it, Madge Mazie Fuller!"

The girl gasped.

"I owed you that for your slurs on the police department," he smiled. "I've watched every move you've made from the day of your trial until last night, when you bearded the old rascal in his den! I was within ten feet of the Spider when, without warning, he opened the

door of the closet into which Kruger had sent him and, unmolested, left the building. It was I who provided you with dainties while you were in jail. I could not prevent your going there, but I saw that you were well-treated. The doctor who performed the operation on your nose is a good friend of mine; he told me of your wonderful hypnotic power. It was I who sent the Spider to you. I even saw him leave your apartment, box under his arm. Of course I only suspected, but certainty came when I overheard the Spider's conversation with the chief. Kruger is gone, Mazie; shot himself when you left him. Say you will marry me, Mazie!"

The girl reeled and fainted in his arms. "I remember," she said after recovering consciousness. "You were the one who provided me with counsel."

"Say you will marry me," he pleaded.

With a sigh of unutterable content she nestled her head close to his breast, and her lips met his.

A GOLDEN IMAGE

TWO miles out from Kamakura and about twenty miles from Yokohama, Japan, on a terrace, near the temple of Kamakura, sits the most gigantic idol, or heathen god, now known to exist. This immense brazen image of a deity was built or made during the reign of Shomu, who was forty-sixth in the present line of Emperors, and died in the year 748 A. D. This idol, which has been prayed to daily for more than 1,200 years by the crowd of devotees that hourly cluster about it, is still in perfect repair, and justly reckoned as one of the greatest wonders in the Orient.

The dimensions of the god are truly colossal. His height from the base of the lotus flower, upon which he sits, to the top of his head is 62 1-2 feet, and above this rises an aureole 14 feet wide, above which again rises for several feet the flame-like glory which incloses or arches in the whole figure. The face proper is 16 feet long; its width 9 1-2 feet. The eyes are 3 feet 9 inches long from corner to corner; the eyebrows 5 1-2 feet, and the ears 8 1-2 feet. The chest is 20 feet in depth, and the middle finger is exactly 5 feet long.

Around the sides, shoulders and head of the god, in front of the aureole, are sixteen figures, each in a sitting posture, and each eight feet in height. The leaves of the immense lotus, upon which the god sits, are each 10 feet long and 6 feet wide, there being 56 of them in the cluster.

The casting must have been wonderfully well executed, although the fineness of the leaf edges and other parts which I was able to examine, and the elaborate engraving which can still be traced upon the lotus flower itself in the uninjured parts, leave no doubt that the founder's art was supplemented here and there by artists with file and graver.

The image weighs about 450 tons, and is made of a combination of gold, tin, copper and mercury in these proportions:

	Pounds.
Gold	500
Tin	16,827
Mercury	1,954
Copper	986,080
Total	1,005,361

A Man-Eating Tree

I WAS commissioned by the Belgian Government to find a certain rare, wandering plant, that was believed to grow on the higher slopes of Mauna Lea, a large extinct volcano situated on the northern part of Hawaii. I had a station built on one of the wooded slopes of the mountain, far away from any other habitation. My only companion was a native who had lived all his life on this part of the island. About twice a month he would visit the seacoast to obtain needful supplies for our camp. This native, who said that his ancestors were "big chiefs" whose bones lay secretly buried in caves on the mountain side, was very old, although he could climb canyons and scale lava cliffs with wonderful agility.

During one of my botanizing excursions I passed by the mouth of a narrow canyon or gorge, and I asked Pili, the old native, if he had ever explored the same. Pili suddenly became interested in his pipe, and didn't know anything about the gulch, and did not understand what I said. This was rather strange in Pili, for natives generally know every rock and tree in the section where they live, and I knew Pili was lying when he said he did not understand me.

So, naturally, I determined to examine into the mysterious ravine. Some time after this I was walking with Pili down a gentle slope when I saw a number of bones. Pili stopped. He walked back a few rods and sat down on a stump. Not a word would he say. I began examining the bones, and for two hours or more puzzled my brain over a problem as I had never done before. What I found was this: A circular area of about 100 yards in diameter, thickly covered with the bleached remains of birds, animals and human beings. These ghastly relics were scattered among the shrubs and grass, the larger bones near the center; in fact, I found that the bones became generally smaller as I approached the periphery of this circular boneyard. In the center of the circle

was a well-like opening in the ground, from which emanated a sickening odor. No vegetation grew within fifty feet of this cavity.

How came this hole with its horrible stench? How came these bones here? How came they to be arranged about the central opening? These questions continually presented themselves, but they remained unanswerable. A deep mystery seemed to hang over the spot. It was growing dark. I heard Pili calling and hurried to him. He pointed in terror to the center of the bone-covered area. A shadow was thrown on the scene by a rising bank of clouds. But I declare that I saw rising from the pit a visible vapor, a column of visible fog or smoke or gas that was luminous. Spell-bound, I gazed at the spectral column. Near the ground it had the appearance of a phosphorescent flame, and gradually became fainter as it ascended. Your imagination will have to picture the unearthly phenomenon. Pili pulled at my arm, and in silence we left the spot, and we did not loiter by the wayside.

As I was looking for a simple plant, and not blood-curdling manifestations, I was inclined to break camp and leave. But by morning my nerves were in better order, and I went back to the scene of my evening adventure. I could find no clue to the mystery and the matter gradually went out of my mind as I prosecuted my labors.

But I had occasion after a time to visit a spot near where I had seen the canyon about which Pili was so apparently ignorant. One evening I made known my intention to Pili to return to the place and to explore the gorge.

"When?" said Pili.

"In the morning," I replied.

Without a word the old native arose from his mat on the floor and departed. He was gone all night. He returned by sunrise, bearing on his shoulders a bundle. When we reached the canyon he stopped and unpacked his load. I saw a stone idol, curious in shape;

he placed it on the ground, and then took a small pig from the bundle. Making a fire, he sprinkled something in the flames, muttered strange sounds and made symbols in the air with his fingers. The animal offering was placed before the idol. After he had completed the strange rites he said that I might never come back but he had done what he could to preserve my life. He would wait until the going down of the sun and then if I did not come back he would wait for me as he did his father long, long ago, when a son fell in battle. Then he sat down, covered up his head and was silent.

All this made me feel uncomfortable. The natives of the Hawaiian Islands are supposed to be christianized, but in the time of danger or trouble may often turn to the discarded gods of their fathers. I knew that Pili believed that great danger awaited any one who ascended the ravine. But I went.

I had gone about a mile when over the tops of the three ferns I saw a waving mass of sea-green foliage undulating in the wind. The object looked like a bunch of thick-leaved seaweed, and the peculiar motion of the same arrested my attention. I was over three hundred feet away from the curious object, and hurried to obtain a closer view. A wall of

fern-colored lava, about ten feet high, stopped my course. Climbing up so that I could just see over the edge, I saw an object such as the eyes of civilized man never before beheld. Imagine a bunch of sea-weed about twelve feet high, the edge of each piece lined with fine streamers which radiated in all directions and trembled like fine wire spirals, the whole object moving like the fringes of a sea anemone.

I was wearing a heavy felt hat with a wide brim, and I pushed it back from my forehead to get a better view. As I moved my arm the strange object ceased quivering, and every vibrating antenna or streamer pointed directly at me. Just then my foot slipped from a jutting rock on which I was standing, and I fell, but not before something cleaved the air with a horrible hissing noise and struck on my hat crown. I felt the force of a blow as I fell, and knew no more for a time.

I regained consciousness after a short time and lay in a partial stupor. The wall above me was stripped of its verdure, and I saw a long, sinewy, snakelike object writhing, twisting and curling on the rocks. It had missed its prey, and a low, angry hum filled the air.

Send us a one-cent stamp to cover postage, and we will mail you a copy of "Moving Picture Stories."

ARKANSAS WANTS PART OF TEXAS

IF the contention of the State of Arkansas that it should be given title to not only the oil-bearing bed of the Red River, but also to all that part of Texas lying between the Louisiana boundary and the 100-degree of longitude and north of the thirty-second degree of latitude is sustained by the United States Supreme Court, it would mean the slicing off of the richest and most populous part of this State. The legal claim to this big part of Texas by the State of Arkansas was made by the filing recently by that State of a motion in the United States Supreme Court for permission to intervene in the case pending by which the State of Oklahoma is seeking to establish title to the south bank of the Red River.

The filing of this motion by the Attorney

General of Arkansas came as a complete surprise to the legal authorities of this State. During all the years that have elapsed since Texas gained its independence from Mexico and was later admitted to the Union as a State no intimation was ever heard here that Arkansas claimed title to any of the territory of this Commonwealth, it is stated.

According to the boundary line as described in the motion filed in the Supreme Court by Arkansas the part of Texas involved in the claim is about fifty miles wide and 600 miles long, the long way running east and west. It includes Dallas, Fort Worth, Wichita Falls, Sherman, Denison, Abilene and all those smaller towns north of Corsicana. The population of the disputed area is about 3,000,000 people. it is stated.

The Ray of Death



Edgar^{by} Daniel Kramer

INSPECTOR TRAILOR was waiting for David Thorne when the latter alighted at the drab country station. The inspector's face grew bright with relief as he spied the long, shambling figure and the expressionless face of the detective, whose half-veiled eyes seemed to see nothing and yet saw everything.

"What's the trouble, anyway?" Thorne drawled, as they climbed into Trailor's car, and his eyelids lifted for a moment to reveal the pools of his eyes as black and as inscrutable as night.

"Murder!" Trailor snapped out, stepping on the accelerator. "Dirty murder!"

"I thought as much," Thorne answered listlessly, "when you phoned me this morning. Details?"

"Old John Rockham's been killed," Trailor explained, "and I'm pretty much in the dark, so I sent for you."

"One of the Rockham brothers," Thorne asked, "the wealthy old recluse who dropped out of things suddenly some years ago and mysteriously shut themselves away from the world?"

Trailor nodded.

"Yesterday afternoon," Trailor went on, "John Rockham, while sitting at his desk in what is termed the West Room, was filled with a load of buckshot, presumably fired through

the open window about twenty-five feet behind him. He fell forward over his desk. Ferguson, who has attended the brothers for years, heard the shot and rushed in, only to find his master dead. Ferguson claims that no more than a minute elapsed between the report and his entrance into the room. He found the window at the old man's back open, but there was no one in sight, though there is not even a shrub in the vicinity of the house that would offer the slightest cover.

"Am I to understand," Thorne questioned, "that John Rockham and Ferguson, his man, were the sole occupants of the house at the time of the murder?"

"No," Trailor replied. "There were two other servants, the butler and his wife, who does the cooking, and John Rockham's twin brother William, as well as the nephew of the old gentleman, Henry Kalker."

"That all?"

"That's where I stop," Trailor answered.

They had been rushing along the smooth road between the flaming autumn trees, gradually mounting upward as they advanced. Now they were approaching a stately mansion erected on the top of a bare hill that commanded a sweeping view of the neighboring country. The car came to a halt under the portecochere.

"Ferguson," Trailor whispered as they

passed the bent old man who opened the heavy doors for them.

Thorne shot a sidelong glance at the aged servant.

In the shadowy hall they came upon William Rockham and Henry Kalker, their dead sister's son. The old man was tall and lean and dignified, as straight as an arrow and with flashing fire in his deep-set eyes. He seemed like a lion terribly wounded as he bowed with an easy grace on meeting David Thorne.

"Would to God, Mr. Thorne," and his voice was rich and full, yet very tired, "less horrible things had brought you here!"

Henry Kalker's thin face was unusually pale, unhealthily sallow. His nerves appeared at the breaking point. His eyes were feverishly bright, and now and then he would nervously moisten his lips with the tip of his tongue. Thorne stared at the young fellow hard.

"If I can be of any assistance," Kalker smirked, "consider me always at your service, gentlemen."

Trailor and Thorne moved down the dark hall. Arm in arm, with an air of extreme solicitude, the young man assisted his uncle up the broad stairs into the upper gloom.

"This place—ugh!" Trailor began. "It gives me the——"

"A look at the body!" Thorne interrupted.

John Rockham lay calm in death, the image of his living brother. The resemblance was startling. Now a sudden change came over David Thorne. As he bent above the leonine head with its mass of white hair, all his nerves had instantly surged into life. There was a dynamic potentiality about him; all his languor had disappeared. His face was flushed, and although his eyelids still drooped, he was all a-tremble, like a hound upon the scent. The slight depressions on either side of his delicately modeled nose were palpitating with an overmastering eagerness. Even the cold clay seemed to take from him a feeling of power, an intangible something that made one gasp, pause, wonder.

"Some of the shot entered his spine," Trailor explained. "Death was instantaneous, according to the doctor."

"Humph!" Thorne snorted as he finished

his examination. "How far did you say that west window is from the desk?"

"About twenty-five feet."

"Queer! Too far!" Thorne snorted again. "Take me to the room."

Trailor led the way to the west wing of the house through an ill-lighted hall with many turns. He pushed open a heavy door.

"This is the West Room," Trailor spoke softly.

They halted upon the threshold. The room was flooded with dazzling light that streamed through a high window in the western end, facing the afternoon sun. The room was narrow and low with exposed walnut beams. The walls were wainscoted in walnut halfway to the ceiling, while the rest was painted a soft, grayish white. Against the eastern wall, about twenty-five feet away from the big window, there stood a massive walnut desk. One end of the desk was partly concealed in an alcove, so that any one sitting at the desk was exactly in line with the broken north wall. Into the north wall, directly opposite the door, a low fireplace of black brick had been built, and above this a low, broad mantel. Two feet above the mantel, upon the prongs of a deer's antlers, was wired an old-fashioned match-lock. Upon the desk, in direct contrast to the black surface, was a ball of crystal that caught up the sunlight as it poured in through the high window.

"Ferguson tells me," Trailor explained, "that the crystal always occupied exactly the same spot upon the desk. It was never moved around, according to Ferguson."

Thorne strode to the window and examined the sill carefully. Then he leaned far out and stared downward. He turned back to the room, whistling under his breath.

"There are no foot-prints under the window," Trailor offered, "in spite of the fact that the ground is still soft from the rain of two days ago."

"Too high!" Thorne muttered.

He moved to the desk and went over it minutely. With his hand resting upon the crystal, he turned and went over the whole room inch by inch with his eyes. He turned back to the crystal and stared at it hard. Finally he looked at Trailor as if satisfied, and a queer little smile hovered upon his lips.

"I think I've got it!" he murmured.

Trailor's face brightened with anticipation.

"Quarter of three," Thorne looked at his watch. "You say this thing happened at three yesterday?"

Trailor nodded.

"I'll take a peep at things outside," Thorne spoke softly.

As they went out the crystal ball upon the dark desk seemed fairly to blaze with fire, and a long thin sliver of light was shooting out along the northern wall. The room was white with sunlight. The gloom of the hall was depressing by contrast. As they moved down the passage they looked back to see old William Rockham approach the room which they had just quitted. He paused for some time, like a ghost in the shadows. They could hear him fumbling with the knob. Then the door opened slowly. The slit of brightness grew wider and wider. The old man disappeared, and the door-catch clicked behind him.

Circling around the great house, the two investigators stood under the window that opened into the room where John Rockham had died.

Thorne went down on his knees to read the turf. The ground was soft from the recent rains, but the space beneath the window was as unmarked as the face of a child.

"I must be right," Thorne turned to Trailor.

"There are no foot-prints," Trailor pointed out. "Besides, it is eight feet to that window-sill. None but a freak could fire through that opening so as to send the shot with a downward slant into the victim. Absurd! Furthermore, where could the murderer have found hiding? There is no sign of cover for at least five hundred yards in every direction."

"The idea behind that?" asked Thorne.

"Another whim of the old fellows, I guess."

The two detectives stared at each other in puzzled thought.

"I must be right!" Thorne reiterated.

Then a roar as of a thousand cannon thundered in their ears from within the room above them.

"And I could have saved him!" Thorne barely breathed.

Like a cat he sprang to the window. His strong hands gripped the granite ledge, and he

swung upward and into the West Room. Trailor followed him.

There was the pungent odor of burned powder in the air. William Rockham lay sprawled across the massive desk, dead with a charge of buckshot in his head and neck. Little trickles of blood were dripping upon the desk. As his brother had died, so he had died. As Thorne and Trailor bent over the murdered man the door was thrust open and Henry Kalker rushed in. Behind him was the white, staring face of old Ferguson.

"Get out and stay out!" Kalker snarled at Ferguson and slammed the door in his distressed face.

With horror-wide eyes he glanced at his dead uncle, and then turned to Thorne and Trailor, as if he was of the opinion that he might read what he sought in their faces.

"What does this mean?" he asked in a high-pitched, trembling voice.

"It means," and Thorne appeared to see him for the first time, "it means, Mr. Henry Kalker, that you are now one of the richest men in the world."

An avaricious gleam shone for a flickering moment in his shifty eyes.

"Let's not think of things like that now," he gasped. "This is not the time nor the place."

Thorne smiled naively. Trailor stared from one man to the other as though he was unable to comprehend. Then Kalker pulled himself together and approached the body of his uncle. Tears welled into his eyes. His left hand accidentally fell upon the white crystal. He jerked his hand away as though it burned him.

"You are very sensitive, Mr. Kalker." Thorne actually appeared solicitous.

Kalker looked at the detective with bewilderment in his eyes.

"We had better send for the doctor," Trailor suggested.

Ferguson had come back, and he hurried out to phone for the physician.

"To-morrow on the stroke of three, gentlemen," Thorne addressed the men as they approached the door with their limp burden, "to-morrow at three I will produce the murderer of John Rockham and of William Rockham."

Then they passed out of the room and left

Thorne standing by the desk with that queer smile upon his lean face.

At two-forty-five the next afternoon David Thorne and Inspector Trailor walked down the dark, twisting hall to the West Room. As they again opened the heavy walnut door the blaze of light from within made them blink. Thorne was once more his languid, listless self as he gazed around the room. He said never a word as his eyes roved from the window to the low mantel, to the old gun upon the antlers, to the desk, to the crystal ball; one by one he took in all these things as if he had never seen them before. Trailor knew that this relapse into the old mannerism meant that the riddle was answered. Then Ferguson came shyly, unobtrusively. Henry Kalker came, too. His double grief had made him even more white, more furtive, more rat-like than before. There was a look of haggard helplessness and hopelessness about him.

"There are only four of us." He turned to Thorne nervously. "Do you expect your murderer to come to you?"

"Stranger things have happened," Thorne answered in a colorless tone.

It was now ten minutes of three.

"Gentlemen," Thorne began in his usual dead drawl, "it is clear that the murderer of these two good men worked from inside this house. Yesterday's events prove this. Furthermore, the window ledge is too high. Again there are no foot-prints in the rain-soaked earth beneath the window. Finally the accumulated dust upon the window ledge was not disturbed until we disturbed it yesterday, Inspector Trailor and I. Furthermore, no man could find cover unseen, even if we waive the other conclusions. So that theory is disposed of. These crimes were committed from within."

He paused and rested his half-closed eyes upon each of his auditors in turn.

"The agency of these murders has been known to me since first I entered this room," Thorne continued. "My only regret is that I was foolish enough to believe the murderer would not be the ass he has proved himself to be. I thought he would wait a more opportune time to go on with his work. That was my hideous mistake."

It was now five minutes of three.

"Mr. Thorne," Kalker smiled wearily, "do you expect the murderer to solve the problem for you?"

On the instant Thorne's listlessness sloughed off as a snake sheds its skin. He jerked an automatic from his pocket, and his voice had in it the cold ring of steel.

"Stand by the window, Ferguson," he commanded, "to the right, so as not to interfere with the sunlight. Trailor, stand by the door. Kalker, take your place in the chair by the desk with your back to the window. We must be ready when *he* comes."

Kalker hesitated, but the automatic, pointed in his direction, overcame his evident reluctance. Thorne stood close to the desk with the whole room under his eyes.

"Gentlemen," Thorne explained coldly, "there was once a young man who played the game of life unwisely. He was facing exposure, disgrace, prison. Desperation drove him hard."

The autumn sunlight seemed all gathered up in the flaming ball of crystal, and from it there went out a thin finger of light that crept slowly up the north wall. As the seconds passed it mounted upward as inevitably as time itself.

"Watch the ray!" Thorne scarcely breathed.

Kalker, sitting there with his back turned, started, shivered, then grew terribly tense. Trailor and Ferguson leaned forward, their eyes fastened upon the shifting, knife-like rule of light.

"This young man," Thorne went on deliberately, "finally came to the end of his rope. Women, wine, gambling, then theft. He took the only chance that offered. It was a way out, so he thought. He was the heir to millions and millions. He would hurry his legacy."

Slowly the streamer of light, white-hot in its intensity, moved across the black of the mantel, over the soft gray-white of the wall like a writing finger that spelled out doom.

"The ray of death!" Thorne whispered.

Inch by inch the ray of light rose until its fire blazed into the powder-pan of the old match-lock as it hung upon the antlers with its muzzle pointing downward upon the man at the desk.

Somewhere a clock began to strike.

"This young man murdered his own blood," Thorne droned.

Kalker was trembling horribly.

Then there came a flash and a loud explosion that rumbled like thunder through the narrow room. The air grew acrid with the stench of burned powder. With a terrible shriek, Henry Kalker jerked to his feet and then tumbled forward across the desk to lie breathless and still.

"He has paid," David Thorne spoke softly. "Kalker knew what was coming to him, even though the gun wasn't loaded to kill this time. There was no shot in it. His own fears made him pay the price of his treachery. This is his confession!"

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THE LONDON POLICE

THE London police force, like all the institutions of that vast metropolis, is arranged upon a gigantic plan. The superintendents, inspectors, sergeants, and constables make up an army 13,800 strong—a truly formidable force, but none too large when it is considered that the Metropolitan Police District extends over a radius of fifteen miles from Charing Cross, exclusive to the city of London and its liberties, and embraces an area of 688 square miles, of a ratable value of 33,800,000 pounds per year.

Over such an area as this, including as it does a population of some 6,360,000 persons, there is, of course, a vast amount of work to be done; and it must be borne in mind that the duties of the London police are not limited to the taking into custody of criminals and disorderly persons, and the watching of property, but include such duties as the carrying out of the Smoke Abatement acts, the inspection of common lodging houses, regulation of street traffic, and at certain times the onerous duty of taking up stray dogs; all of which duties are anything but light in a town like London; nor are they likely to become less arduous, seeing that during one year 12,252 new houses were built in the police district, making twenty-nine miles of new streets.

The number of persons apprehended by the police during one year was 72,130. The value of property stolen during the same period were 118,340 pounds, of which 18,129 pounds was recovered, leaving a net loss of 100,211 pounds; but the latter sum, it is to be presumed, would be set down by certain parties as a net gain. Notwithstanding the vast size

of London, it is somewhat astonishing to notice that no fewer than 17,802 persons were reported to the police as missing, and 8,943 were found and restored to their friends. During the twelve months there occurred 1,050 fires. The truth of the saying that it is safer to travel by railway than to walk the streets of London would seem to be quite verified by the fact that the number of persons known by the police to have been run over and killed in the streets was 114, the number maimed or injured from the same cause being 3,949.

During the year licenses were issued to automobiles, hackney drivers, stage drivers and conductors to the number of 26,320; and it is very interesting to observe that among these men there are 987 over 60 and under 70 years of age; 130 over 70 and under 80; and 4 over 80 years old. Occasionally a London driver may have the chance of a windfall in the shape of property left in his conveyance, for it seems that in one year the number of articles left in public carriages, etc., and deposited in the hands of the police was 22,361, out of which 12,111 were restored to the owners, who paid as rewards to the finders sums amounting to 1,993 pounds, representing a value of between 15,000 and 16,000 pounds. Among the finds the following are some of the most remarkable: Bag with 216 pounds in notes and gold; another bag containing 100 pounds in notes; a third bag with bonds to the amount of 300 pounds; and several lots of cash varying from 10 to 50 pounds. After the articles have been deposited for three months, they are, in the absence of being claimed by the owners, returned to the parties depositing them.

The Black Diamond

By JACK J. GOTTLIB

PART ONE

CHAPTER ONE

A WRITTEN THREAT

NIGHT had fallen. Silver stars twinkled in a sea of dark blue; the blackness was pierced by street lights and mel-
lowed by the gray of a full moon. It was an ideal night in May.

Mortimer Quaine, known in the world of business as the "Fountain Pen King," turned from the large casement window and faced several other occupants of the parlor. There was a drawn paleness in his cheeks, and the other two men observed that his lips trembled. Reaching into his pocket, he drew forth a letter and tossed it on the table.

"Read that," he said.

Joe Tranton, the private detective, picked up the letter. He noticed that it bore a foreign postmark and that it had already been opened. It had evidently been read and reread a great many times, for it was creased and fingered. Without further ado he took the letter from its envelope and read:

"MORTIMER QUAIN: At last I have a chance to write to you. I am at Port Said, on the other side of the world, and I'm not exactly as rich as you must be. Probably you thought I was dead, but, as you see, I am very much alive, more's your hard luck. You dirty crook! I've gone through hell down here. I've had all kinds of diseases. I've known starvation. And all because you, overburdened with money, stole that black diamond from me when I had nothing else in the world.

"But I'm coming back, and I'm coming back soon. So look out! TY ZACHARY."

The detective read the letter over again. Then he handed it to Robert Quaine, son of

the old merchant. Bob was a young man of about twenty-six or -seven, with a pleasant, clean-cut face and observant gray eyes. Though he resembled his father, there was a marked difference between them: the elder Quaine was dignified and sharp of glance and manner, while Bob was carefree, blithe, and easy-going.

As he read the letter, however, young Quaine's eyes were troubled; there was a pained look in them. It was hard to imagine that his father had done anything dishonest. When he was through he glanced questioningly at the old man.

The elder Quaine nodded.

"Yes, it's true," he said. "I have done this man, Ty Zachary, a great injustice. But don't think that I do not regret it; I do. I thought he was dead, but now that I know him to be alive, I am willing to make restitution to him of the jewel."

"Tell us about it," suggested Tranton.

"It was three years ago that my physician told me to take a long holiday in order to avoid a nervous break-down as a result of business worries. Of course you remember it, Bob. I am a man of strange impulses, and I decided to go to Africa. I journeyed alone. While in New Guinea I made the acquaintance of Ty Zachary. He was down and out, and I lent him a helping hand.

"One day he showed me a marvelous gem, so black in color that it looked very much like an opal. But in reality it was a black diamond. There are very few such diamonds in existence, and as this was rather a large stone, it must have been worth a fabulous sum. I don't know where Zachary got it, but I believe he came by it honestly.

"I offered to buy it from him, but he declared it was not for sale. I had a large collection of precious stones; that was my hobby, you see, and I wanted that black diamond for

my collection. But no matter how much I offered, he refused to sell.

"To make the story short, gentlemen, I—I stole the diamond. At the time I committed the rash act Ty Zachary was in the hospital as a result of an accident, and the doctors said he would die. Since he had no friend in the world but me, I believed that the black diamond was rightfully mine. Very shortly afterward I sailed for home.

"Since he did not write to me for three years, I was convinced he had died in the hospital. But now that he is alive, I have no other course open but to return the diamond to him."

"Where is this black diamond at present?" asked the detective.

"In this very house. It is the prize of my collection."

"And the reason you sent for me you said is because you wish some one to watch the diamond?"

Mortimer Quaine sat down nervously.

"Yes, but only partly because of that. I hate to confess it, but the truth is I—I'm afraid. I'm afraid of Ty Zachary. The tone of that letter doesn't sound very pleasant."

Bob Quaine frowned slightly.

"Nonsense, dad!" he declared. "Afraid! Why, there's nothing to be afraid of. You'll meet this fellow, give him back the blamed thing, and then the whole matter can be filed in the archives."

"I—I'm not so sure." For once the elder Quaine had lost his austere, seigneurial manner. "You don't know this man, Bob. He's not like most men. He's a savage—a primitive savage! Do you know what the accident he had in New Guinea was due to? There was a broil in the back room of a cabaret, and Ty Zachary killed a man with his bare hands! It's the truth, and he wasn't drunk, either. Friends of the slain man attacked and almost killed Zachary in turn."

There was a convincing, gruesome note in the voice of the old gentleman that did not escape the others. For a moment no one spoke. Mortimer Quaine took a handkerchief from his pocket and wiped his brow. Then he continued quickly:

"That's the sort of man Ty Zachary is. He's unreasonable, and he's cruel. I've always

thought that his mind was a little warped. I have many enemies, Lord knows, but they're all the ordinary run of men, and I'm not afraid of them. Zachary, however, is the kind that will stick a knife into your back and think nothing of it."

"That being the case," said Detective Tranton, "I think it's wise to be on your guard until the matter is satisfactorily settled with the fellow." He picked up the letter and glanced at the date. "This letter was written two weeks ago. That means that Zachary may already have landed in this country."

"The fact of the matter is," said the elder Quaine uneasily, "he already has landed. At this precise moment he is in this very city. How do I know?" Well, ever since I received his letter I've had detectives watching both the docks and the railroad stations. Zachary came in on the seamship *Orinota* this morning."

Joe Tranton mused.

"Have you given your detectives orders to follow Zachary and find out where he's staying?"

"No; I hadn't thought of that. I told them to report to me when they'd found out he'd landed. Then I dismissed them."

"It oughtn't be such a difficult matter to find out his whereabouts," Detective Tranton said confidently. "Meanwhile, Mr. Quaine, I'd advise you to remain in seclusion for two or three days."

"Dad's going to the theatre to-night," interposed Bob.

"That's sq." The elder Quaine's face brightened a shade. "My favorite actor is playing, Mr. Tranton, and I can't miss him. But I promise to heed your advice after to-night." He took out his watch, and as he glanced at it his eyes grew stern again. "Confound that man! Doctor Greene always keeps me waiting. Here it's eight-thirty, and he hasn't arrived yet. And that sap of a Scanlon! Dressing yet, I suppose."

Prichard Scanlon was his secretary. He was a shrewd, handsome man, with piercing black eyes and a mustache even blacker. For various reasons Mortimer Quaine required that he live in the same house, and Prichard Scanlon occupied a large, well-kept chamber on the third floor. He was treated as one of the family; both the elder and younger Quaine

liked him. On this night Scanlon, Quaine and Doctor Greene, Quaine's closest friend, had arranged to go to the theatre to see "Taming of the Shrew."

"If you'll pardon me a minute," the old man said, "I'll go upstairs and see what's keeping Scanlon."

He went out the door, and Bob and Detective Tranton heard him moving swiftly up the staircase. Bob picked up a magazine and lit a cigar, while the detective stared out of the window with narrowed, thinking eyes. Presently footsteps were heard descending the stairs. A moment later the door was flung violently open, and Mortimer Quaine staggered into the room.

"What's the matter," Bob cried, springing to the side of his father.

Well might he ask. For in five minutes Mortimer Quaine had changed into a different man. A while ago he had been floridly healthy, but now the color of his face was ashen. He trembled as though with the ague. His eyes contained a light horrible to behold.

He leaned heavily against the younger Quaine.

"God!" he gasped. "Prichard Scanlon has nearly been murdered!"

CHAPTER TWO

THE LEERING FACE

MORTIMER QUAINES voice died down sharply. Bob, whose own face had paled, looked swiftly at the detective. Then, without a word, he moved swiftly from the room and dashed up the stairs. Detective Tranton followed him. As Mortimer Quaine, breathing heavily, began to ascend the stairs in their wake the bell rang, and he hurried to open the door.

It proved to be Doctor Greene—a short, thin individual, with sandy-colored hair and deep-set, sea-green eyes. He was dressed in black evening attire. Stepping into the vestibule, he began apologetically:

"I'm sorry I'm late, but——"

"Never mind that," Mortimer Quaine interrupted hastily. "You're just in time. Some-

thing awful's happened. Go upstairs, and hurry!"

He made for the stairway, Doctor Greene close behind him. They traversed the second landing quickly, and within several moments entered the room which Prichard Scanlon occupied.

It was an unusually large chamber, and despite the fact that it tenanted five men, it did not in the least seem crowded. A square-shaped electrolier sent a mellow light into every corner of the room. The door of a closet stood open, revealing such raiment that men wear, while on the huge, white-enameled bed lay a full-dress suit, which evidently had been taken from the closet.

Prichard Scanlon, but half dressed, lay out-flung on the bed. He was not dead, for the unrhythmic movement of his chest as it rose and fell was perceptible. But he presented a picture as shocking as though he had breathed his last. His face was contorted; his hair was clotted with a thick substance. His eyes were closed; his hands clenched so tightly that they were white.

There was momentary mute horror on the faces of all four onlookers as they reviewed this repugnant scene. Mr. Mortimer Quaine, when he realized that his secretary was not dead, sighed with relief.

"Thank God, he's still alive!" he cried. He turned to Green animatedly. "Hurry, doctor. Whatever you do, don't let him die."

Doctor Greene stooped over the bed. An oppressive silence followed—a silence broken only by the unconscious man's irregular, almost inaudible breathing. For fully five minutes the others waited, hovering about, faces anxious and portentous. When the doctor finally straightened up he shook his head forlornly.

"I haven't my surgical instruments with me," he declared, "but I can tell you this is a very, very serious case. In fact, it may mean death. The best thing to do is to call up the nearest hospital and have them send an ambulance down before it's too late."

Detective Tranton hastened from the room to do the physician's bidding. Meantime Mr. Mortimer Quaine hurriedly explained to Doctor Greene how he had made the discovery. Neither he, Bob, nor Tranton had heard

sounds of a struggle, if struggle there had been, nor had they heard an outcry. He had gone up to the room to see what was detaining Scanlon, and had found him senseless. At first he had believed his secretary dead, but—

A cry from Bob interrupted Mortimer Quaine's explanation. The younger man had made a discovery. As he arose from the floor he held in his fingers a blunt, heavy piece of lead. The metal was stained with blood.

"This is what Scanlon was attacked with," he exclaimed, handling it gingerly. He passed it to Doctor Greene, who gave it a cursory glance.

"That is so," the physician agreed. "I think, Mr. Quaine, that this is a case for the police. The sooner they are informed the better."

The elder man nodded.

"They shall be informed immediately. The man who has made such a cowardly attempt on poor Prichard Scanlon's life isn't fit to roam at large. I can't possibly imagine who could have done this. I didn't know Scanlon had any enemies."

"It was a thief, most likely," said Doctor Greene. "No one but a thief would use such a crude weapon as this. You know what a crime wave is cursing the cities just now."

Bob Quaine shook his head.

"I doubt it, doctor," he said. "If it were a thief there would have been thievery. And apparently nothing is missing."

"The servants—"

"There's only the housekeeper, and she always leaves immediately after dinner. Besides, it's ridiculous to think that such a kindly soul as Mrs. Hearn would sneak up on Scanlon and bang him over the head."

"Then I believe it was a thief," said Doctor Greene firmly. "You are not yet sure that nothing has been taken. You don't know what valuables this man owned."

Mortimer Quaine jerked his head.

"By gad, you're right!" he asserted. Suddenly a curious expression came into his eyes, as though a startling thought had struck him, and he added: "The black diamond! Possibly—"

He broke off, and with remarkable swiftness made for the door. He was out of it before Bob or the doctor could turn. Bob's fore-

head creased in a frown, while he regarded the physician broodingly.

"That blamed jewel again!" he muttered.

Mortimer Quaine descended the stairs briskly with fear in his heart. What if the mafauder who had attacked Scanlon had also stolen the black diamond? He trembled as he thrust the door of his den open. Approaching a long, narrow table, which contained a number of trays divided into small compartments, he drew out a bunch of keys, eagerly thrust one of them into a keyhole, and extracted a certain tray. As he looked down a large diamond, coal black, opalescent, quivering, met his gaze.

"Whew!" he murmured. "Some scare!"

He placed the tray back in its place and locked the table. But as he glanced towards the doorway his heart gave a sudden throb.

An ugly, leering face, broad and leonine, its features contorted with hatred and loathing, its wall eyes bloodshot, was framed in the aperture. As though something had forcibly struck him, Quaine reeled back. But when he looked again, after having closed his eyes from dizziness, the face was gone!

Quaine ran to the door. The face he had seen was that of Ty Zachary!

There was no one in the corridor; no one in any of the chambers on the second floor. Quaine's assurance returned.

He said nothing of the face he had seen, or imagined he had seen, to either Bob or Doctor Greene. He told them that the black diamond had not been touched.

Shortly an ambulance arrived, and with it came the police. Prichard Scanlon, still unconscious, was removed to the hospital, while the authorities conducted a brief investigation in regard to the murderous attack.

Prichard Scanlon regained consciousness the next day, and the doctors declared he would live. But when the police questioned him in regard to the identity of his mysterious assailant, Scanlon declared that he knew nothing whatever about it. He had been dressing to go to the theatre, he said, and all unsuspecting had felt suddenly a stinging blow on his head. Could he describe his assailant? the police asked. No, he replied, he could not. Had he seen him? No, he had not seen him. Had the blow been delivered from behind? It had.

That was all the information the police could acquire from Scanlon. They were disappointed. They had expected to clear up the mystery with his recovery of consciousness. Some astute detectives declared at headquarters that Scanlon knew more than he admitted, but for reasons of his own refused to impart his knowledge to the police. Be that as it may or may not be, headquarters had no proof of the vague assertion, and proof is what really counts.

The theory that the assailant was a thief was discarded, for nothing was found to be missing. No finger-prints other than Bob Quaine's were found on the bloodstained piece of lead, and Bob proved unquestionably that they had come there when he had first discovered and picked up the metal from the floor.

Nor were there any clues. Even the manner in which the marauder had entered the house was not ascertained.

So the matter remained a mystery—for the time being.

Precisely two weeks after Scanlon was attacked at exactly eight-thirty at night Mortimer Quaine was found dead in the library of his home, a bullet lodged in his right temple.

CHAPTER THREE

THE FINGER OF SUSPICION

IT was Tranton, the private detective whom Quaine had re-engaged, who made the discovery of the old man's death. For the fifth time that week Joe Tranton had come to report that his operatives were making progress in the search for Ty Zachary, but as yet their efforts had not been crowned with success.

Once, twice, and even a third time he rang the bell, but though he waited long and patiently no one came to the front door. A trifle perplexed, he leaned forward, and to his surprise the door went wide. Entering, he came to the library door, which also was open. And as he glanced in evidence of the crime met his gaze.

At least this was the brief account Detective Tranton gave to the police when they rushed to the Quaine home immediately after he called them by telephone. But Joe Tranton

did not voluntarily disclose the reason for his visit to Quaine.

Somehow knowledge of Mortimer Quaine's death leaked out, and the news spread through the district like wildfire. Very soon after the police and the coroner's physician had arrived curiosity seekers began to gather about the house. A patrolman took his place by the doorway, and none but several reporters and those who had business within were admitted.

Inspector Wyatt, the same official of the Homicide Bureau who had conducted the investigation when Prichard Scanlon had been slugged into unconsciousness with a piece of lead, now proceeded with the others towards the library. Issuing a terse order to one of the bluecoats behind him, he entered and cast an appraising glance about the room.

Mortimer Quaine lay on the floor.

The medical examiner stepped forward and made a more or less prolonged investigation. Finally he arose, announcing:

"Mr. Quaine is dead. A single bullet entered his brain through the temple, and his death was almost instantaneous. He has not been dead more than an hour."

The inspector of detectives nodded sharply. His keen blue eyes roved the room, lingering as they reviewed the still form.

"M-m-m," he soliloquized, stroking a stern chin. "No weapon. The man responsible for this must have taken it along with him."

Stepping about the library, he regarded several things carefully, while the others stood still watching. Mr. Quaine had been something of an art dilettante, and the chamber was not without its artistic furnishings. Oriental porcelain of the Raku group covered a teak-wood mantel, together with fine pieces of faience; a huge painting by Greuze hung on the wall, while on the library table there beamed a tiny Buddha of gold and bronze. The inspector observed these things stoically, then gave his attention to the casement window. It was slightly open.

The police official turned to Detective Tranton.

"You discovered this, didn't you?" he asked, sweeping his hand in the direction of Mortimer Quaine. "Tell us about it."

The detective did so. He told of the open door, of finding Quaine's slain body, and of

calling the police. When he was through the inspector again fingered his chin—a habit of his.

"Let me see, now," he mused. "We've had trouble here before, I think. Oh, yes; that fellow Scanlon. He was Quaine's secretary, wasn't he?"

Detective Tranton nodded. "Yes."

"It strikes me," said the inspector, "that there's a close connection between this crime and the other one. Had either Scanlon or Quaine any secret trouble that you know of?"

"I don't know anything about Scanlon," the detective said evasively.

"And Quaine——"

Tranton hesitated. He was in a quandary. Should he tell what he knew of Mortimer Quaine's trouble with Ty Zachary, and thus brand Quaine as a thief?

"Well?" asked the inspector.

But before Tranton could reply there was an interruption. The door rattled, and Bob Quaine, followed by Doctor Greene, burst into the room. There was a light of expectancy on young Quaine's countenance. He breathed hard, and his facial muscles twitched frantically.

With a sob he knelt down and buried his head in the dead man's lap. The others stood by respectfully, awed by the tragic scene.

Doctor Greene, whose own manner was one of solemn exaltation, stooped over and patted Bob Quaine's shoulders soothingly.

"There now, boy," he murmured softly.

Bob straightened up. His eyes were singularly dry. Gone from them was the look of terror; in its stead was a piercing fire that spelled keen determination. The inspector of detectives noticed it, and nodded approvingly.

"Don't you worry," he said. "We'll get the criminal who did this, if it takes a year and a day. You're Quaine's son, aren't you? If there's anything you want to say——"

"Bob Quaine and I were at the Florentine Club when the news of—of this accident reached us," declared Doctor Greene.

The inspector thought swiftly. It seemed as though a look of suspicion had come into his blue eyes at the physician's innuendo. He rubbed his chin.

"Exactly," he said. "But you misunderstand me. You were present when I investi-

gated the attack upon Scanlon, weren't you? You're Doctor—Doctor——"

"I'm Doctor Greene."

"That's so. But," and the inspector turned to Detective Tranton, "this gentleman here was about to say something that might throw a ray of light on the mystery."

Tranton wet his lips, glancing furtively in the direction of Bob Quaine. The mind of the young man, however, had no regard for anything but the sudden overwhelming loss of his father; so without hesitation Joe launched into an account of Mortimer Quaine's trouble with the man Ty Zachary. He told everything: of the black diamond, of the written threat, and of Quaine's desire to find Zachary and make restitution. Mortimer Quaine had described Zachary for him, and in turn he gave the description to the inspector. Every one listened intently while he spoke; the pencils of the reporters could plainly be heard. When he was through there was an almost racking silence.

The inspector broke it.

"Then it simply becomes a case of finding this man Zachary to learn the truth," he pronounced. "Quaine mentioned that he was a savage sort of fellow, did he? When we get hold of him he'll be tame enough, all right."

"A while ago," said Doctor Greene, "you said that this crime and the attack on Prichard Scanlon were connected. If so, what possible reason did Zachary have for wishing to murder Scanlon?"

"I don't know," admitted the inspector. "But just because a thing isn't proved doesn't mean it's not so. How do you know that Zachary didn't have it in for Scanlon, too?"

Doctor Greene shrugged. The inspector bent down beside the body of Mortimer Quaine. Something had caught his keen eye. The hands of the dead man were tightly clenched, as though in anger. Between the white fingers of his right fist there peeped forth a tiny something that was blue and white. With an effort the police official managed to unclasp the fingers, and he drew forth a small handkerchief, crushed into a ball, that was trimmed with fine, dark-blue lace.

"M-m-m," he murmured, rising. "A woman's handkerchief! I might have known. As in most every case, there's a woman involved."

He placed the fabric on the table and straightened it out with the palms of his hands. There was no doubt that it belonged, or had belonged, to some one of the female sex. Small, dainty in spite of its innumerable creases, it was anything but ordinary looking. The edges of dark-blue lace were slightly curved, and crossing the whiteness of it were very thin, horizontal and vertical lines.

As the inspector held it up to view his sharp eyes traveled from one face to the other. Most of them showed a keen wonderment, but on one there was a look that was not altogether of innocent surprise. The police official remarked the sudden start Bob Quaine gave; remarked also his look of amazement. And the deep acumen of the inspector told him that the dead man's son knew something about that handkerchief—perhaps its owner.

"Does any one here recognize it?" he asked mildly, surreptitiously glancing at Bob.

The young man flushed. He bit his lip in deep vexation. There was no doubt that there was something on his mind—something that concerned that small, blue-laced handkerchief. But he offered not a word.

"Are there any female servants in the household, Quaine?" asked the inspector.

Bob Quaine bowed. "Yes; a housekeeper."

"Do you think this handkerchief belongs to her?"

"I can't say. I—I've never seen it before."

"All right then." The inspector pivoted on his heel. "Unless any one present has anything to say that might aid in clearing up this case, we'll consider the preliminary investigation closed."

He glanced around expectantly. But no one offered to speak.

"We'll notify the coroner and have the inquest as soon as possible. Meanwhile, Quaine, see that nothing is disturbed?"

Bob slowly moved his head in the affirmative. He seemed dazed.

"Then that's all," said the inspector.

At police headquarters, forty minutes later, the inspector was closeted in his office with a short, wiry man, whose clothes were baggy and whose eyes were piercing.

The inspector, his finger level, was speaking:

"I want you, Olsen, to pick up young Robert Quaine's trail and keep it. Don't lose track of him for a moment. I've a hunch that he's going to lead us straight to the person or persons who shot his father."

When the plainclothesman was gone the inspector drummed his finger-tips over pursed lips.

"Who knows?" he mused softly. "Young Quaine inherits his father's money, doesn't he? And there's been cases of patricide before to-day——"

(To be continued in our next number)

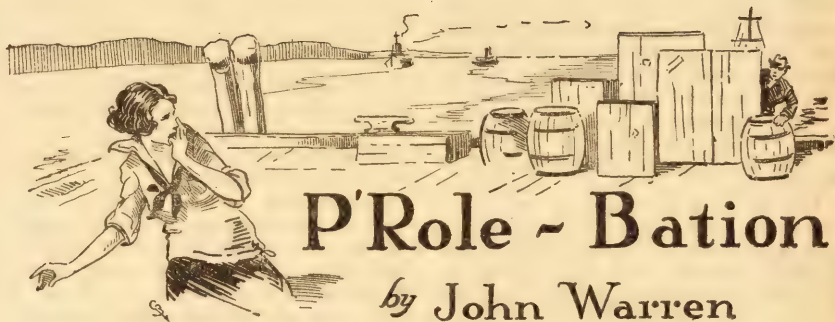
PIED PIPER COMES BACK

THE Hungarian capital has been overrun with rats during the past winter. The bath-rooms of the most fashionable hotels have been set with traps, and rats have been seen even upon the smart dresses of chic ladies in some of the best restaurants. So it is no wonder that the Pied Piper has come back as well.

He has arrived in Budapest and has claimed to be able, for a sum of money, to rid any building of rats in twenty-four hours. So great has been his success that already he has

earned 32,000 Hungarian kronen in a fortnight.

His methods are precisely the same as those of the Pied Piper of Hamelin except that he seduces the rats into following him not by playing upon a flute, but by a strange cry—half moan, half song. In the cellar of the infested place he prepares in the darkness a great brew of poisonous herbs and hanging over the poison-containing copper kettle, with a black cloth shrouding his head and shoulders, he drones a strange Tartaric song.



P'Role ~ Bation

by John Warren

MILLIE started and slipped quickly back into the side door of Grogan's poolroom. The sound of footsteps grew louder. Some one with an uneven tread was hurrying toward her over the rough board pier.

Back she pressed against the stained-glass door. Just beyond the edge of her ragged skirt the slow rain fell gently, monotonously.

The footsteps reached the front entrance of the poolrom, then stopped. Heedless of the cold drizzle, the girl peered warily around the edge of the doorway and then stepped out. Abruptly she darted back. It was too late. The footsteps started again, this time toward her hiding-place.

With one hand held up as though beseeching silence, Millie waited while a young man, coat collar turned up, cap pulled down over his eyes, limped swiftly forward. A wooden leg, iron-ringed at the bottom, protruding beneath his long overcoat, rang his approach over the hollow-sounding planks.

As he drew near a questioning, puzzled look on his rough-hewn face, Millie boldly stepped forth and motioned him to follow her. Lightly she led the way to the rear of the poolroom. The shack-like structure looked blankly over the bay, where an occasional tug or launch

poked out through the heavy fog, hoarse whistle blaring.

"Say, what d'you want to bother me for, Crip?" she demanded, barely above a whisper, edging sideways along the narrow ledge which protruded out over the oily, swishing water. "I wasn't hurtin' nothin'." Though she spoke with energy, her manner and the shadow in her deep blue eyes showed the fear in which she held him.

"What yuh doin' down here then?" gruffly countered Crip. His small steel-gray eyes stared with an expression of intense desire and admiration, unrepressed by 'conventionalities.

"I'm trying to find Joe," answered the girl, sliding slightly away, frightened by the pent-up longing which twitched the muscles of his fallow face.

"What d'yuh want wid Joe?" The covetous expression faded to hostile resentment. "What d'yuh see in that lilyboy, anyhow, Millie? He ain't nothin'. He ain't worth kickin' out o' the road." He held a match to the shred of tobacco and paper pendant from his lower lip.

"He might be worth somethin' if you'd let him alone!" she flared. "You've got 'im in trouble now an' if he don't git out an' goes to the jug it's all your fault, Crip Carley! He ain't guilty an' I know it, but he'd never been

in no trouble if he hadn't been hanging' around with you an' your gang o' loafers all the time!"

"What d'yuh mean, go to the jug?" Crip's amazement was real.

"Tom Benson tole me this mornin' Flatfoot McNare's lookin' fer Joe for that Stein robbery. An' Joe never done it! An' I want to find 'im an' tell him! An' if he gits sent up—'cause Flatfoot'll railroad him sure—you'll git yourn some day, Crip Carley!"

Crip stared mutely with a strange lack of anger.

Quickly the resentment died in Millie's face, leaving a look almost of apology. It would only work his resentment in another direction; his influence and power were too extensive to cross him. It was not by complacency that Carley had earned his leadership of the Water-front Gang.

He might even use his knife. True, she had never known of his using on a human form that long, wicked weapon, the fear of which, together with his domineering personality, had helped him maintain undisputed his leadership. But she thought him capable of stabbing to kill, and coldly, without mercy. She had seen him, surrounded by a group of his satellites, throw a can into the air, whip out his knife like lightning from its sling under his left arm, and pierce the can before it reached the ground. Better be diplomatic, for Joe's sake, if not for her own.

"I'm sorry, Crip," she hastened to add. "But Joe's a good boy, and if he gits through this an' straightens up, he can be, you know, different from—from the rest of us. He can go far, Joe can. You'd ought to help him out o' this mess, Crip. Joe's been to school more'n us. An', you know, he's the only one his mother's got. Mrs. O'Neil wants him to go on back to school. An' you know, Crip, he's crazy over you; you could help him out if you'd want to!"

The appeal had the rudiments of effective oratory. The youth's face slowly molded back into its usual expression of cynical superiority. "Yeh. But what you so interested for?" he pursued.

The girl hesitated. Should she lie? Perhaps the truth might win his help, perhaps it might lose all. For Millie knew something

about Crip; that is, she knew how he felt, or he could feel, toward her.

"Well, you see, Crip"—she hung her head, watching him from the corner of her eye, hope and pride vibrating in her voice—"Joe an' me, we're goin'—we're goin' to git married. Some day. That is, if—if he gits out o' this trouble an' don't go bad down here. An', Crip"—and the girl with a sudden strange flash of pleading mixed somehow with pity placed her hand upon his wet coat sleeve—"you like me, an' you'll help me, won't you—cause Flatfoot'll fix the judge if you don't! I need your help more'n anything!"

"Well, what d'yuh want me to do?" he demanded, his voice gruff with a calculated brusqueness. "But I want yuh to understand I don't know nothin' 'bout that Stein deal—not nothin' at all, see? An' I don't want to git hooked up in it."

"I don't know, Crip!" She was slightly frightened by the glare which had flared up in his eyes. "If I could only see him a minute! Oh, Crip, he's inside now, ain't he? You'll send him out, won't you, Crip?"

"Aw' right." He turned without a word, stumped heavily around to the front entrance, furiously banged the swinging doors and entered.

From the side entrance Millie could hear the rough shouts that greeted the gang leader.

"'Lo, Crip!" The click of the pool balls stopped.

"'Lo." The waiting girl could almost feel the contempt of Crip's response to his fawning followers."

"Joe, come here." Millie trembled as she pressed back against the door embrasure. Would Joe give way to the hasty temper she had so often seen master him? Or did he fear Crip Carley, which was almost as bad?

The moment passed, and Millie could hear nothing. She divined presently that he had joined Crip and that the two were now in low-voiced conversation. The only sound which reached her was the renewed click of the ivory balls.

The swinging doors burst open with a bang.

Every one knows the expression of angry chagrin which beclouds the face of a small boy who, even while spreading for pig-tailed adoration his peacock's tail of doughty prow-

ess, hears afar the humiliating hail: "Come, son, let mother wash your ears!"

Even so the mood of the youth who now came dashing out upon the pier. Manfully he shook his arm loose from Millie's placative hand, and balefully he glowered upon her.

"What d'you want to come taggin' me down here for?" he demanded, taking care not to speak too loudly. "The gang'll think I'm a fine one sure, with you trailin' me like this. What d'you want, Millie?" he concluded more gently as he noticed the hurt, rather crushed expression in her eyes.

"Oh, Joe!" she pleaded. "Don't you see what they're doin' to you? You're gettin' just as rough as them! Your mother's cryin', an' you're hurtin' her terrible, Joe stayin' away this way. Don't you like me no more, Joe?"

Awkwardly, apprehensively, he put his arm about her shoulder, first looking all around to see that none of the gang lurked near. The resentful look faded from his face.

"Sure, Millie; I'm sorry. But a fellow's got to have a little fun! An' you hadn't ought to— What're you lookin' at?" he demanded as he saw Millie's eyes fix themselves on his feet, then shift to his head.

"Where'd yuh git them new dogs an' that new lid? Say, Joe, you didn't have nothin' to do with that Stein job, did yuh, Joe? Honest, Joe, tell me." The girl's voice had risen to one of shrill excitement, as though seeking by her own vehemence to assure herself of the boy's innocence.

The surprise in the youth's voice was sincere, although the short, sharp laugh which followed appeared rather forced.

"Oh, them!" he answered lightly. "Fellow sold 'em to me this morning. Give him two dollars for 'em." Joe chuckled. "Seemed anxious to get rid of 'em. But I didn't have anything to do with the Stein robbery, an' you know it. Goin' home? I might as well, too, I guess. Come on, let's—"

He stopped. The swinging doors had opened. Crip Carley sauntered out, turning up his coat collar. He halted halfway out, observing Joe and the girl talking.

"You go on home an' leave me be! Don't come chasin' down here no more!" Joe spoke roughly, shaking the girl's restraining arm off

sharply, and flung himself past Crip and into the poolroom. Crip turned and followed him inside.

Millie, bewildered, turned and saw the figure of the gang leader disappearing back into the poolroom. She understood. Hurt, her pride and love deeply wounded, she put her chin high, and without another word walked slowly up the pier.

There was no feeling of resentment within her as she trudged over the water-soaked planks, only a desire to protect the boy from himself. She had had no opportunity to warn him of his impending danger from the detective. She fought down an impulse to rush back through the doors and cry out to him, but restrained herself. She knew him better than he knew himself—his wish to be part of the gang, his fear that the unmanly blight of high school education might cause him to be looked down upon by its members. She even divined his dread lest his unconventional faithfulness to herself might be thought effeminate and make him the butt for taunts and jeers.

Her thoughts were interrupted by a low, mysterious whistle, close at hand. She looked about, her eyes closely searching the boxes and barrels piled along the pier until they rested upon the face of a man almost concealed by a rough felt hat pulled down over his features. Only his head was visible, the rest of his body being hidden behind a large packing case.

She recognized him as Flatfoot McNare of the waterfront detective squad. He was beckoning to her, and in response to the motion she slowly sidled toward his hiding-place. What would Flatfoot want with her? She didn't exactly fear him, but she instinctively dreaded him as an enemy of her and her kind. Perhaps she might find out whether he really suspected Joe or whether her alarm had been false.

"Lo, Flatfoot. What d'you want?" she demanded as she rounded the boxes and came within full view of the heavy-set figure. Just out of arm's reach she halted, poised ready to leap at his slightest move.

"Lo, yourself, Millie. What you doin' down here?"

"Me? I'm just takin' a walk. What you doin' down here yourself?"

"Workin' on the Stein deal. Know anything 'bout it?"

"Nope, don't know nothin' about it. Wouldn't tell you, anyway. Me, I'm kinda glad they done it; he's an old stick-up an' he stuck pa 'bout three prices for the last suit he bought off him. Who d'you think done it, Flatfoot?" Her question was guileless.

"Some of that gang of young devils over there in Grogan's. Don't know which one, but you can bet your bottom dollar I'm goin' to find out. I'm tellin' you, Millie, if you know anything 'bout it, you'd better spit it out, 'cause I'm goin' to get 'em."

Millie sensed a hidden personal threat in his words.

"Honest, Flatfoot, I don't know nothin'. I'm goin' on home." She left him standing there scowling. His words had left her more uneasy than before.

She had not gone far when she heard the uneven thumping of running steps behind her.

"Goin' home?" Crip Carley panted as he overtook her. "I'll walk along with you." For several minutes the two continued in silence. Then Crip broke the strain.

"I could a-knocked 'im down, but I didn't," he growled. "Millie, what d'yuh monkey round with Joe for? He ain't no good."

"Oh, Crip, you don't understand! He's just as kind an' good as he can be when he ain't with the gang, but when he is he tries to make 'em think he's the worst of 'em, an' he ain't! He's all right, Joe is," she flared, offended at any criticism of the boy.

"Aw right. Don't git hot 'bout it. What wus you doin' over there behind them boxes?"

"Talkin' to Flatfoot," she answered abstractedly.

"What'd that guy want with you?" Crip snapped, his eyes shifting sharply back toward the pier.

"Ast me if I knew anything 'bout the Stein robbery. Told him I didn't. Who done it? D'you know, Crip? Say, that's the store where I wus goin' to buy my trousseau; that is, if pa ever quits hittin' the booze long enough to give me any money," she ended with a brave little laugh.

"Naw, I don't know nothin'. Fergit it." They were at the street corner, but Crip turned

her way. "Come on. I'll walk up the street with you." As though by mutual understanding, neither had mentioned the suspected connection of Joe with the robbery.

Silently the girl fell into step. She wanted to get home and cry. If she could only get Joe out of this trouble and back in school again! Her own feelings didn't so much matter. Perhaps Crip would help. Instinctively she felt she had found an unexpected ally in the young man who now marched stolidly at her side. Instead of resenting her confession of love for Joe, he was helping her. She felt confident he would continue to do so.

As they approached the rough board steps below the ground-floor-back which Millie and her mother called home, she held out her hand in silent thanks.

At that instant a slight, gray-haired woman, whose face, lined with hard work and care, yet bore hints of an earlier life spent amid soft surroundings, appeared at the door of the adjoining dwelling.

"Millie, dear!" The girl turned toward the gentle, tired voice. "Have you seen Joe? He hasn't been home since yesterday; I'm that worried——"

Millie hesitated.

"Don't worry any more, Mrs. O'Neill," she said soothingly. "I saw him this afternoon. He's—he's down at Grogan's playin' pool. Crip's promised me to take care of him."

"At Grogan's!" the mother wailed, swaying against the door-jamb. "I've asked him—oh, dear, I don't know what to do! He's there so much, and I'm afraid if he doesn't straighten up and go back to school he'll end up badly somehow—maybe in jail. I've tried so hard——"

Crip and the girl glanced at each other significantly.

"Crip's goin' to look after him," repeated Millie. "Ain't you, Crip?"

"Yeh," assented Crip reluctantly. "But——" "He's running with that Keller boy, and Keller's in trouble," sighed the mother. "The judge said if he didn't look out——"

"Look here, Mrs. O'Neill!" Crip spoke almost roughly. "You think I'm a pretty tough nut, an' I guess maybe you're prob'ly right, but I'll tell you it's a d—n good thing that Keller kid got into trouble the way he did."

"Why, how——" Millie was alive with interest.

"'Cause Judge Lindley give him orders, that's why. And the Keller kid's keepin' straight—the outside anyway. Lots better'n goin' to jail, I'll say."

"I've heard of that," said Millie. "What is it they call it—something like—p'role-bation, ain't it? What is it, Crip?"

Crip was too gentlemanly to laugh at the quaint mispronunciation. "Yeh," he assented. "That's it. Judge makes the Keller kid, f'r instance, go back to school an' git home at nine o'clock every night. Makes him report every Saturday mornin', and the teachers and his mother report, too. That's how it is. It's when a feller's convicted of somethin', an' the judge thinks he ain't done nothin' much an' won't do it again, an' makes him promise not to do nothin' more or he'll t'row 'im in the jug. An' if he makes a break then he t'rows 'im in, see?"

Millie saw. "An' so the Keller kid is goin' to school!"

Mrs. O'Neil, shaking her head despairingly, retired within doors. Millie, her eyes big with sympathy, turned toward Crip; but at this moment a small boy, out of breath, came running and halted abruptly as he saw the leader of the waterfront gang.

"Hey, Crip!" yelled the youngster. "You'd oughter know—Joe O'Neil's been pinched! They took 'im to headquarters. Flatfoot McNare it was done it; says he pulled the job at Stein's th' other night."

Crip's face suddenly compressed into hard lines.

"Stein's!" exclaimed Millie. "Oh, Crip, it's a mistake! Joe never done it! Why," as her excited memory sprang into action, "Joe never done it; he couldn't a-done it! He——" She stopped abruptly.

Crip stood silent, scowling.

"Listen, Crip," said Millie with deadly quietness. "Just what time was Stein robbed?"

"What makes yuh think I know?" Crip's tone was savage.

"Oh, you hear everything! Go on; I've a particular reason for——"

"I hear 'twas between eleven an' 'leven-thirty," stolidly said Crip. "But I don't know nothin'."

"Crip!" Millie's face flushed burningly. "Joe O'Neil was with me when that happened. We—we was up to the picture show. 'An' afterward we walked home slow, an' honestly he never done it."

"I never said he did——" began Crip, but paused at a sudden change in Millie's telltale face. The girl's eyes grew cryptic. Her brown face paled again.

"No, no, it's all a lie!" she cried with a hard laugh. "Just forgit I told you. 'Tain't so, anyhow. I'm crazy, I guess."

She darted up the rough board walk and vanished, leaving Crip staring after her from the curb, her face showing many emotions.

That night Millie was uncommunicative. She refused to talk to her mother, and immediately after dinner went into the single bedroom and lay there, wide-eyed, until morning. Nor during the next day would she talk. Mechanically she helped around the house, and once went out into the street, where she joined a group of women of the neighborhood excitedly discussing the arrest. They grew silent when she approached. Sentiment, she decided, was against Joe. She learned that Joe would come into court the following morning.

Toward noon she put on her hat, threw a shawl over her shoulders, and started toward the Hall of Justice. With head erect she made her way through the group of lounging men about the entrance, and at last knocked determinedly at a door marked "Detective Squad."

"Come in," shouted a rough voice from within. Softly, slowly she pushed open the door and stepped inside. A shuffling of feet and lowering of chairs greeted her. Two men seated at the end of a long table stopped their card game to stare.

"What can we do for you, madam?" asked the man nearest her, bowing with mock courtesy and pulling forth a chair.

"Is Mr. Flatfoot McNare here?" asked the girl, speaking hardly above a whisper.

"Mr. Flatfoot McNare!" shouted the man. The sarcastic emphasis upon the prefix passed unnoticed by Millie. McNare turned from a bowl in the corner where he was washing his hands, saw the girl and reached for a towel.

"Hello, Millie," he said. "D'you want to see me?"

"Yes, sir. Please."

"Righto. Come over here in the corner." He drew two chairs toward the window apart from the other detectives, who were watching him amusedly. "Now, what is it, Millie?" He bent toward her reassuringly.

"Flatfoot, you ain't got nothin' on Joe, have you?" The words came as though with an effort.

"Oh, I don't know. Why?" McNare watched the girl shrewdly, calculatingly.

"Well, remember that Keller kid that got p'role-bation?" Millie shifted her attack.

"Yeh. Why?"

"Would Joe git p'role-bation if he's convicted?"

"Might. He might git—" A crafty gleam of understanding came into the detective's pale-green eyes. "Say, d'you know anything 'bout this case?"

"Could you git him that if he was convicted?" Millie was not to be diverted from her subject. "Don't!" she gasped as Flatfoot grasped her roughly by the wrist.

"Sure. I kin git 'im anything." He released her. "You tell what you know an' I'll fix it up."

"An' make him promise to go back to school an' learn a trade an' come home at night?"

"Sure. We'll fix 'im up. You kin count on me. Now tell me what you know."

Fifteen minutes later the girl made her way slowly from the building. She did not observe the figure of Crip Carley leaning lazily against a tree across the street as she emerged.

Only once during the endless afternoon did Millie display any interest in events. That was when a summons-server appeared at her home and notified her to be present as witness at Joe's trial.

Her eyes red from a night of bitter weeping, she dressed slowly, carefully for the trial. Silently as though fearing some one would offer to accompany her, she stole out and hurried toward the Hall of Justice.

Up the long dark stairway to the courtroom she climbed, one hand clinging to the rail. Just as it had, on her visit the day before, the grim building awed her, terrified her.

Some one directed her, and at last she found herself in a gloomy high-ceiled room. At one end a white-haired man was seated behind a

desk on an elevated platform. This must be the judge. Groups of men were gathered in front of the judge's seat. In a far corner she caught the gleam of brass buttons. From the corners of her eyes she watched the two big policemen for a few moments.

With bowed head, refusing to look at the friends and acquaintances on every side, she scuttled up to the only vacant seat, one directly in front of the judge.

After a while she stole a glance around. On the other side of the room she could see Joe's mother, head bowed down, weeping silently. Joe had not been brought in yet. Perhaps they would not bring him at all. Her ideas of a trial were very hazy.

Her mind a blank, she sat while, rapidly and without delay, the court dispensed with one after another of the cases on the calendar.

"Joe O'Neil." The words flashed into her consciousness. She looked up quickly. The judge was consulting a paper he held in his hands.

"Joe O'Neil," she heard the clerk echo as she tried to collect her frightened thoughts.

Ah, there he was, over in the corner, beyond the rail! He was standing now. How pale, and weak he looked! She wanted to run to him, to comfort him and tell him it was all a mistake and would be set right soon. But she clenched her hands until the rough knuckles stood out like white scars, and bowed her head.

Finally she looked up. There was a world of love in her eyes as they rested upon his pale, round face, uncommonly frank and clear for a product of the waterfront district. But her lips settled into a determined line. Often she had looked onto those blue eyes with their curious mixture of weakness and strength. She knew that expression now trembling about his half-weak, half-strong youth, so typical of those whose fate it is to be continually misunderstood, and who, lacking the incentive, still have within them the ability to strive well in an endless fight.

As she gazed at his shiny blue suit, rumpled from two days and nights in a cell, she was conscious of the look of confident expectation with which he was regarding her. "You'll help me, won't you, Millie?" she knew he was mutely saying.

She refused to meet his eyes, and turned to

the clerk, now reading from the big book spread before him on the table.

"Charged with entering and robbing the store of Isadore Stein, 239 Battery street, on the night of June 17th," she heard him drone. "Guilty or not guilty?"

Like a voice from a long distance she heard the boy answer stoutly: "Not guilty!"

"Are you ready to proceed with the trial?" she heard the judge demand of the young attorney whom Joe's mother had secured for her son's defense.

"Yes, your honor."

With head bowed into her hands she listened while the trial proceeded. She almost wept as the youthful lawyer tried to break down the testimony of Flatfoot McNare and Isadore Stein. Both identified as stolen the shoes and cap which had been taken from the boy upon his arrest.

She refused to look up as Joe was brought to the witness stand in his own defense.

"Where were you on the night of June 17th?" Tremblingly she waited for him to answer.

"From seven o'clock to half-past ten I was to a picture show with Millie Gafferty." All the life and confidence fled from his voice as the girl refused to meet his pleading look for the verification of his words. He appeared now to be speaking automatically, as though words were useless. "And from about eleven-thirty I was home in bed," he continued listlessly.

"And in the meantime?"

"I was walkin' home from the picture show with Millie Gafferty."

The spectators giggled.

Indistinctly and without understanding Millie heard the cross-questioning. Her thoughts wandered; she remembered back to the night of the robbery; remembered their talk and the moment when Joe—

"Call Millie Gafferty." The young attorney's voice rang with prophecy of triumph. She started.

It had come. Could she go through with it? Resolutely she stood erect and, without glancing at the spectators, stumbled with faltering feet up the step to the witness chair.

Weakly she held up her hand as the clerk administered the oath. She swore to tell the

truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

"Do you recognize the prisoner, and if so will you please give us his name?"

Only faintly could she distinguish the words through the heavy heartbeats thumping noisily against her ears.

"Joe O'Neil," she answered, speaking hardly above a whisper, her fingers twitching, her eyes centered upon a small break in the rug.

"Were you with him on the night of June 17th?"

Now was the time. Could she do it? She knew that upon her answer depended the future of him she loved.

Slowly, her voice hardly to be heard above the tense, quick breathing of the spectators, she spoke:

"No, sir."

"What's that?" The attorney's voice rang with indignation.

The tone strengthened the girl, and she answered more loudly: "No, sir."

The young lawyer leaped frantically to the step in front of her. "Do you mean to say—"

"That will do," curtly ordered the gray-haired judge. "The witness has answered your question. Is that all? Witness is excused."

It was over. She had not failed. But the strain was too much. She broke down, sobbing wildly, hysterically.

"Silence in the courtroom!" she heard the clerk shout as the prosecuting attorney half led, half carried her from the stand back to his own seat at the table. She did not see the supercilious half-smile, half-sneer on McNare's face as she stumbled past him.

What went on after that she did not know. As though far distant she heard the heated repartee between judge and lawyer and felt the amazement of the onlookers. Other witnesses were brought to the stand, but what they said she could not hear. Her own sobs drowned out all comprehension.

"Officer, bring forward the prisoner." Indistinctly she heard the judge's command. Oh, if she could only get away!

"Joe O'Neil, you have been found guilty of larceny. Have you anything to say before sentence is pronounced upon you?"

Mercifully her sobs shut out the boy's response.

"Joe O'Neil"—would he only get it over with?—"you are hereby sentenced to six months—"

"No! No!"

The girl sprang wildly to her feet, her arms thrown high. Had Flatfoot lied to her?

She whirled toward the detective. There he stood, arms folded, chatting easily with the man at his side. He refused to meet her eyes.

"No!" she shrieked. "You can't do that! He said——"

She went no further. Whizzing through the air, over the heads of the crowd, had come a knife, apparently bound straight for the judge's head. Within an inch of his ear it struck, and stuck quivering in the high back of his seat.

Tremblingly Millie fell back into her chair. What was it?

With tears dripping down her cheeks, she watched the judge as, brushing back the attendants who had hurried up, he coolly loosened the knife, unfastened a smudgy bit of paper attached to the hilt and spread it out before him.

What was it? Why wouldn't he speak? Why was he staring at her? Was it to her he was beckoning? Yes, it must be; every one was looking at her.

As she stood weakly to her feet she heard the judge speak again hoarsely, abruptly:

"Judgment recalled! Clear the courtroom!"

Amazed, Millie followed the judge into his chambers, directly behind the bench. And Joe was coming, too! Why had the judge brought him in?

"Look there. Is that true?" demanded the judge gruffly, thrusting the note in front of her.

She bent over it, Joe at her side.

"Juge it's a dam ly," was what she saw scrawled in an awkward hand, hardly legible. "I dun the Stein job myself. Shees lyin' cause she thinks yull give him probashun like you done the Keller kid and yull make him go on back to skule and git home at nite. Millie loves him and she wants him to go strate. And hes a squar kid cause he wudnt squeel that i selled him the things. He stuck by the gang. Youll find the rest of the things under the fift post from Grogans end of the pier. Tel Flatfoot hes a rottin detektif—Crip Carley."

Apprehensively she watched the boy at her side as he looked up, comprehension coming slowly into his eyes. Would he understand?

"Millie, I'm goin' back to school to-morrow." The tears rushed up hotly as she saw him reach blindly toward her.

She barely heard the judge as he said: "H'm. Excuse me. I must issue a warrant for Carley's arrest."

But the warrant was never served. Crip had been gone too long. It is gossip around the waterfront that the judge failed to press the case very heavily and that the warrant never went farther afield than the clerk's desk.

Be that as it may, it is known that no police action was taken when, a few weeks later, rude, hand-drawn posters appeared stating that the newly organized "Waterfront Athletic Club, Crip Carley, president," would give its first reception in honor of the engagement of Mr. Joe O'Neil and Miss Millie Gafferty.

Send us a one-cent stamp to cover postage, and we will mail you a copy of "Moving Picture Stories."

DEPOSITORS TO BE FINGER-PRINTED

ALL postal savings depositors must now be finger-printed; this supplements the present method of identification and safeguards both the paying postmaster and the depositors. The system was inaugurated on December 15th last, and the prints are taken whenever an

account is opened or interest or principal paid. Care is taken to disabuse the minds of depositors of any connection between this procedure and criminology; those who already have accounts will register their finger-prints in the first transaction they have.

Magic Extraordinary

THERE was stopping until recently in New York a man who, besides being an extensive traveler and close observer of human nature, was also a magician of wonderful ability. The latter qualification he only practiced for his own amusement and the delectation of his friends. To the writer the gentleman gave some interesting and truly wonderful stories of the magic art.

The finest exhibition I ever witnessed, said he, was in Annam. I was traveling through the country with a party of German officials, when we stopped one night at an inn where it chanced that a number of magicians were resting. There were six of them—four men and two women—all very small except one, who was a fleshy giant, resembling the typical wrestler.

I made their acquaintance, as I was then much interested in legerdemain, and soon won their good will. They were eager for me to show them an exhibition of my skill. I did so, but in every instance they caught me and laughed at my efforts, excepting once. At that time—though it is not known, of course—I was the equal of any prestidigitateur in this country, and had tried points with them all. I mention this to show how skillful these natives were, as I tried some of our best tricks upon them, and, curiously enough, the most stupid one of all fooled them.

It was this: You remember the Pharaoh serpents that were much in vogue some years ago. They looked like beans, but when touched with a match began to grow, and squirmed out into snakes six or ten inches long. I had a lot of them made of a large size, so that when they developed they were of the exact size of my fingers and of the same color, which was then a dark brown. I had some cups on the end of each finger to conceal them, and when I tried the trick, which was in the evening, in the public room, I stepped over to the candle that stood on the

floor and deliberately put my fingers in the flame.

This caused a stir among all assembled, as they expected to see them burn; but I said, as heat makes the plants grow, so it would burn my fingers. Then each finger began to lengthen, slowly squirming out, inch by inch, crossing each other, and twisting in the way these objects do until finally they were all fully ten inches long, presenting such a horrible appearance that the entire assembly started back, and a number of natives left the room. Seeing that I was going too fast, by a quick movement I knocked off the ashes and made my fingers assume their natural appearance. To say the natives were astonished hardly expresses it. They begged for the secret, and before I left I exchanged it for the trick of the thumb nail.

After I had finished the doors were closed and only those admitted who paid a regular admittance fee—a small sum; and soon, the apartment being filled, the magicians began their performance. The audience sat on the floor about the fakirs, so that they had no way of concealing themselves or hiding anything.

At their request, I examined them and satisfied myself that they had nothing about them. Then one of the women stepped into the inclosure, the rest remaining behind the spectators, who formed a close ring behind it. The light was now turned down a little, and in a moment the woman's face began to be illuminated by a ghostly light that extended over her entire body. She then began to move around and around, uttering a low, murmuring sound, the while gradually quickening the pace, until she was whirling about like a top. A moment of this and the light that had clung about her seemed to be whirled off by centrifugal force, and assumed a pillar-like form beside her.

As soon as this was accomplished she

stopped, turned and began to mold the light with her hands; and, though I could distinctly see her hands move through the light, as if it were a cloud, it began to assume human form. We saw the arms, legs and hands all molded, and finally a face and headgear. She next called for a light, and the candles being re-lighted, there stood an utter stranger, a native, seemingly evolved out of cloudland.

He stepped forward and grasped me by the hand; his hands were moist, as if with perspiration, and he was a very healthy spirit. After he had talked and drank a glass of wine, he took his place beside the woman again, and began to whirl about.

The lights were dimmed, but not so that we could not see, and in a few moments the figure began to fade away, soon assuming the appearance of a pillar or form of light, and then attaching itself to the woman and seemingly being absorbed by her. All this was done in a very short space of time, before the eyes of at least fifty people, and not ten feet from myself. The girl appeared greatly exhausted afterward.

Now this affair would be explained by the spiritualists as a materialization and by the Psychological Society as some new sense of power, etc.; but between you and I, who know that all things can be explained by cold facts, it was merely a clever trick, so skillfully done that I did not discover it in any way or shape.

The man next took his place in the ring, and handing me a large, highly ornamented saber, he said:

"In five minutes by the clock I wish you to behead me."

I objected, of course, but he insisted, and said it had been done a dozen times; so I finally agreed. He was searched, and in the dim light began to contort himself in strange positions, until he seemed to grow perceptibly smaller, and finally stood before us so gauzy that I thought I could see right through him. It was now five minutes, so I took the saber and struck a light blow, only sufficient to knock a man over, when, to my horror, blood spurted into my face, and the head dropped with a thud upon the floor. As soon as it fell the body stooped and picked it up, held it in the air, then placed it upon the shoulders. The

full light being turned on there stood the giant, grinning and warm.

The blood? That had faded away by the time the light was turned up, and you must remember that in all this, though the light was dim, it was not sufficient to prevent our seeing everything, and seemed to be used only that we might observe the figures of light that were evolved so curiously from the mediums, as our spiritualists would call them.

The next trick was equally mystical. All the party now stepped into the ring and began to chant and move about. In a few minutes they ceased, and we observed that one was missing, though no one had seen him go out. A moment after the whirling was repeated, and another was found to have disappeared, and so on until in fifteen minutes only the giant was to be seen. More light being given us, a noise was heard outside at the door, and upon some one opening it, there stood the mystic five clamoring for admission. That ended the performance for the night, and I sat up the rest of it, or well into the morning, trying to find out how it was done. The natives accepted it as magic without debate, and I began to think that that was the easiest way out of it.

The following day another performance was given at midday, that was even more wonderful. The giant, as I called him, caused the audience to sit on the grass plot, leaving a circle of about twenty-five feet across, and in this the jugglers took their places, the giant opening the entertainment by taking a roll of ribbon, and by a dexterous toss sending it up fifty feet or so, when we distinctly saw a small hawk dart at and carry it up higher, until we nearly lost sight of it. It then seemed to enter a cloud that, I assumed, was caused by something burning on the ribbon; but from the cloud came sliding down, first, a dog, then a snake—a good big one, too—that wriggled off the moment it touched the ground, and was captured by one of the men. Then a large object was seen sliding along, and one of the women leaping forward, received and held it out to the crowd, a laughing native baby. The giant had all this time held the end of the ribbon, and, releasing it, it seemed to disappear in the air, at any rate we saw it no more.

A few moments later they all joined hands

and began to move about rapidly. When they moved to the right I distinctly counted twelve persons in the circle; when they changed the move we saw only eight, and some one appeared to be standing in the centre.

These are only samples of the marvels, as I might say, that they went through; but the last one puzzled me as much as ever. The party left except the giant, and he, taking a large native parasol, asked if I would carry it back to the inn for him. I assented, and then he politely requested me to take it in five minutes by my watch, and, mind you, he was surrounded by a dense throng. Proceeding to the centre of the plot, he squatted upon the ground and drew the umbrella down over him like a cone over dice, thus hiding himself completely. In five minutes I lifted the covering, and to my amazement he was gone.

Yes, it was empty, and the sod was solid under it. The crowd looked up in the air and yelled. I shouldered the umbrella, and, going directly to the inn, found my friend, the giant, smoking a cigarette on the veranda. He greeted me with a smile, thanked me for the umbrella, opened it with a quick motion, and pulling down a seeming inner lining, motioned me to look in. Doing so, I saw hanging on a hook my watch and chain, that I had not missed.

I finally concluded I had been hypnotized.

We parted the next day, much to my regret, and I learned only a single trick, as you see, and the speaker held up his thumb, while the Arabic figure stood out in bold relief on the nail, and slowly faded away before the eyes of the astonished writer.

If you want to see curious sleight-of-hand performances, however, continued the narrator, you must go to Madras or Mangalore, in India. No jugglers in the world can compare with those who practice their curious art in that far-away land.

They have neither curtains nor tables, boxes nor drawers, nor do they wear loose embroidered mantles with large sleeves, as certain wizards usually do.

A Mangalore or Madras juggler is only clothed with a strip of muslin fastened around his body. His limbs are bare. He stands in an open courtyard, without a tree, a grass plot, or the shelter of the tent, and, in the midst of a ring of spectators, all gazing at him with

intense watchfulness, he calmly performs the tricks which look like miracles.

For instance, he extends to you his empty hands. You see that there is nothing in them. He stoops down, picks up two or three pebbles, rubs his hands together, and presently there is a shining silver rupee.

Again he shows you his bare hands, picks up the rupee, breaks it in two, or pretends to do so, and there are two coins. He breaks them again and again, until he has ten or a dozen, and where the money has come from or where he had it hidden, no mortal can tell.

The basket trick is a favorite and a very mysterious one. The basket is shown you empty. It is turned upside down in your sight. You know perfectly well that there is nothing beneath it, but the juggler sings a little song. "Mieow, mieow," is heard. He lifts the basket, and out jumps a cat. Sometimes, instead of "mieows," one hears the barking of a dog or the cooing of a dove, and one of these emerges instead of Madam Puss.

More amazing still it is to see puss there by herself at one moment, and the next, on the lifting of the basket, to behold her the centre of a happy family, kittens crowding by her side, and a bird perched on her head.

I once saw a juggler set a large top spinning on the end of a stick, which he balanced on his forehead. The top then stopped revolving or went on at the word of command, just as if it had been alive. Some of the jugglers dance airily on a loosely fastened rope, their feet bare and earthen jars on their heads. I saw one one day walk along a rope without a misstep, although buffalo horns were tied to his feet.

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Kid Spanish

by J.C. Kofoed

KID SPANISH crouched by a window that had its shade pulled down to within an inch of the sill and peeped into the street. Street is perhaps a misnomer, though it had the designation of the Rue de l'Herroniere on the municipal map of Nantes. It was merely a blind alley that rose in a series of steps to the house where Spanish was hiding, and was flanked on either side by a row of dwellings as lecherous and foul as the greasy pavement in the alley.

Spanish held a snub-nosed, blue-barreled automatic in his fist, and the lids were drawn savagely over his cinder pits of eyes. Every gendarme in the Department of the Loire was on the lookout for him, for there was a heavy price on his head.

A warm, muggy rain was falling. There was not a breath of air in the room where Kid Spanish now peered into the street, now paced uneasily across the room. A slightly greasy aroma of cooking assailed his nostrils. From downstairs he could hear the tinpanny beat of a piano and a woman's shrill voice singing "Madelon." From the Loire came the hoot of a steamboat siren and the incoherent noises that are part of a waterfront.

There was nothing Kid Spanish wanted so much as to get out of France. Even foot-

loose and with plenty of money in his pockets, Nantes would have held small attraction for him. With the American military police seeking him for desertion and the theft of thousands of dollars' worth of supplies, and with the French police keen to get him for murder, the place was a nightmare.

Kid Spanish had been born in America of a Spanish father and an Indian mother, and his lineage was crossed with two or three other kinds of blood. Sometimes, as these cross-breeds do, a splendid man physically has been produced. Spanish was big and broad-shouldered, with a shock of inky hair and keen blue eyes—a most surprising combination in a man of his breed.

He was a reckless daredevil, as lacking in heart and morals as he was in fear, but there was one thing he dreaded. That was confinement. His Indian blood could make him face death with a stoical smile, but he shuddered away from the thought of being caged behind iron bars. He often boasted that he would never be taken alive, but if the unexpected happened he preferred going to a French guillotine rather than an American prison.

There came a timid rap on the door. Though this house where he lodged, and for that matter all the other houses in the Rue de

l'Herroniere, was a nesting-place for criminals, he trusted none of them. When Spanish, a picture of desperate courage even in his shirt sleeves and stockinged feet, called "Entrez," his automatic was leveled at the door.

Instead of the wrinkled old crone of a concierge, a young woman entered—a girl, one might say, and the prettiest one Kid Spanish had seen in many a long day. She carried a tray full of food, and edged crab-fashion through the door. The Kid regarded her with brightening but partly suspicious eyes. Pretty girls had been used as decoy ducks before this!

The young woman set her tray on a rickety chair and closed the door. Then she looked at Spanish, showing her little pearls of teeth in a smile.

"Drop that gat," she said, "and get some food inside of you. The Jenies are gathering in the Quai de la Fosse, and they'll be rushing this house inside of an hour. I've been out there, and I heard them. While you're eating I'll get you some peasant's clothes. There is a secret door at the back of this house, and you can skip that way. The St. Nazaire train leaves the Gare Orleans at 4.16. You can be on your way before the police start looking for you."

Spanish turned, his stockinged feet making no sound on the thinly carpeted floor, and peeped once again into the Rue de l'Herroniere. It was still deserted. He cocked his chin around on his shoulders and looked at the girl.

"Who are you?"

"My name is Fanny Lore," she said. "Up until two months ago I worked the department stores in Paris—shoplifting. Then"—a flush stole up into her cheeks—"I fell in love—the finest man that ever drew the breath of life. I told him what I was, but he didn't let that interfere, John McIntyre didn't. He is arranging for us to get married and for passports to the States, but in the meantime I'm staying here, because the police would still like to get their hands on me, and I couldn't stand that. I couldn't. I've heard all about you, Kid Spanish: You're a bad lot, but I know what it means to be trapped."

Spanish looked at her sharply. He was not quite sure whether or not he could trust her. Suspicion was bred deeply in his bones. He

couldn't afford to risk those iron bars, and yet—she had told the truth—he was trapped. The Kid turned back to the window while he puzzled the thing over in his mind. Then for a moment she vanished from his mind like the figment of a forgotten dream.

The police were coming!

A gendarme crept into the alley. He kept himself flattened against the line of the houses, but he must have been conscious that he made an excellent target, for he kept shooting nervous glances toward the windows where he thought it likely that Kid Spanish was hidden.

A rather ironic smile curled the Kid's thin lips. Field mice hunting a bulldog! He waited until it seemed likely that the gendarme would reach the door, then he "pulled down on him."

The spurt of flame from the window and the policeman's fall came almost simultaneously. The Frenchman dropped awkwardly, breaking his fall with his elbow, and began to drag himself toward the mouth of the alley like a dog with a shattered leg. Murder flamed in Spanish's eyes. He lifted his arm again, but Fanny's hand fell on his wrist.

"Give him a chance," she said.

"Chance!" growled the Kid. "What chance would he give me?" But he did not fire. He drew her back beyond the line of the windows, which was fortunate, for the gendarmes covered their comrade's retreat with a lusty rifle fire.

The windows were shattered. An acrid smell of burnt powder was in their nostrils. The Rue de l'Herroniere was clear of gendarmes, but where it opened into the Quai de la Fosse a number of them milled about uncertainly.

Fanny slipped into the hall, and came back a moment later with a smock, a pair of corduroy trousers and a beret such as the Breton fishermen wear. They smelt strongly of fish and tobacco. Spanish donned them, keeping an eye cocked on the window that commanded the street. He talked incessantly in a bitter tone that held no trace of fear.

"They'll never take me—never. I'm not afraid to die, sister, but I'll do it in the open with a gun in my fist. They'll never coop me up behind bars. Let me get away from these frogs and the M. P.'s 'll never take me. There aren't many of 'em left in France, and

I can keep away from 'em. Say, tell me, why are you helpin' me get away?"

"You're an American, and you're in trouble," said Fanny shortly.

The Kid grunted. In all his life he had never gone an inch out of his way to help any one, and the girl's philosophy sounded shallow. What difference did it make whether he was an American or a Chinaman? The cops were after her, too, and she didn't relish a cell any more than he did.

"Are you sure that's all?" he rasped.

The girl smiled at him frankly. "Oh, you think I might have fallen for that handsome face of yours? Not a chance. I'm on the level now, and I am going to marry John McIntyre."

Spanish grunted. He was rather disappointed that his charms had failed to make a deeper impression. They usually did. The thought rankled a bit, but he followed her down the stairs to the secret doorway without speaking again.

They cut through the Rue Petit Bacchus into the Quai de la Fosse.

Looking back, they could see a crowd swirling about the entrance to the Rue de l'Herroniere, where the gendarmes stood firing at the place where they thought Kid Spanish lay hidden. A little warmth of gratitude surged up into his heart. This Fanny was a good kid. He would have been in there waging a hopeless fight if it had not been for her. And she was wanted by the police herself. A good kid, yes.

They walked along without speaking to each other. Spanish noticed that she was dressed as a Parisienne might be expected to dress, and was altogether a rather conspicuous object in so poor a quarter and in company with a man in a peasant's costume. He shrugged his shoulders uneasily, and was about to speak on the subject when four men gathered in front of them and blocked further progress.

They all wore little Vandykes and red noses and an air of official importance. Plain-clothes men! Spanish knew them for that in an instant. His hands were reposing in the front pockets of his smock, each gripping a revolver. No chance for them to take him. Better to end it right here in the smoke.

They had stopped in front of a tobacconist's

shop. Spanish turned his head aside and pretended to look at the meagre wares in the window. Fanny said nothing, but there was a frightened look in her eyes.

"Monsieur," began one of the men in an oily voice when a thought struck Kid Spanish—a vile thought it was, but a welcome one. He was disguised. It was quite possible that these men had not recognized him. On the other hand, Fanny Lore wore no disguise, and *she was wanted, too!* Not so badly as he perhaps, but they would be very glad to lay hands on her. Perhaps if he told them who she was he would bluff them into letting him go.

The Kid felt no shame in the thought of his treachery; no pity for the girl who had gone straight and was to marry "the finest man that ever drew breath"; a girl who loved the clean skies and sunshine as much as he did and deserved them a thousand times more. It was her fate or his, and Kid Spanish never hesitated.

He said out of the corner of his mouth: "Step into the shop here, monsieur. I have something of urgent necessity to tell you."

Two of the oily-looking men detached themselves from the group and walked into the tobacconist's shop with him.

"First of all I desire to know if my surmise concerning your identity is correct," said the Kid in very passable French. "You are policemen, are you not?"

"Oui," chorused the bearded gentlemen.

"I am an operative of the American Department of Criminal Investigation. The girl with me is Fanny Lore, wanted for several crimes. It will not be wise"—he tapped his finger craftily against his nose—"for me to appear in the case. Take her, and pretend that you have already arrested me. Do you understand?" He winked.

"Oui, certainement. Merci, monsieur, merci."

So the renegade stood in the tobacconist's shop and watched the police march off the girl who had taken a big chance to help him "because he was an American." There was not a twinge of remorse in his breast as he saw her look wistfully up at the blue sky—the sky that she might not see in freedom for years. He only thought of his own cleverness in throwing the gendarmes off the track. It was

every one for himself in this old world, and the devil take the hindmost.

Fanny would say nothing to compromise him until she learned definitely that he had double-crossed her. That would not happen for hours. By that time he would be in Saint Nazaire; perhaps tucked cozily away in some ship bound for America.

Five minutes later Spanish entered the Gare Orleans and purchased a third-class ticket. He felt fairly secure in his disguise. At least no American M. P. was likely to penetrate it, and it was only the Americans, with their threat of twenty years in Leavenworth, that caused him particular uneasiness.

Within fifteen minutes a train rolled into the station, and Spanish found an unoccupied third-class compartment. He waited impatiently for the train to move, drumming an impatient tattoo on the window ledge. His keen eyes kept roving about the platform, but he saw nothing suspicious.

Suddenly the compartment door opened and a chunky man stepped in. He nodded and said "Bon jour" affably as he settled himself on the seat opposite. The Kid mumbled an incoherent response. The train soon began to move.

The chunky man leaned forward. There

was a tinkle of metal, and Kid Spanish sat looking down at his handcuffed wrists.

"I am John McIntyre of the D. C. I.," explained his captor cheerfully, "and I was never so damned glad in all my life to arrest a man as I am now. A chap who would throw down a pal as you did Fanny Lore deserves anything he gets. Luckily I was on my way to get her—she's going to be my wife, you know—and I straightened out things with the gendarmes. But you—" McIntyre spat disgustedly through the open window.

The Kid showed his teeth in a cat-like snarl. "I'm not afraid of the guillotine!"

"You needn't be," said McIntyre, "for I've arranged for you to go back to the States and spend twenty years behind the bars at Leavenworth—twenty years, Kid, with lots of time to think of your treachery. And the funny part of it is that you would have gone scot-free if you hadn't blabbed about Fanny to those plain-clothes men! They had recognized neither of you. As a matter of fact, they were strangers in town, and were only going to ask the way to the Rue de l'Herroniere!"

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STONES THAT SWIM

EYE-STONES are really portions of the covering of certain shellfish. They are found at the opening of the shell, and serve to close the entrance when the animal draws itself within. They are of various kinds, but those used as eye-stones are hard, stony bodies, about the size of split peas, one-third to one-sixth of an inch in diameter, a little longer than broad, having one surface plain and the other convex.

When they have been worn by the action of the sea, they are very smooth and shining. Like other shells, they are composed of carbonate of lime. When placed in a weak acid, such as vinegar, a chemical change takes place, carbonate acid gas is given off, and in its escape produces the movements which are popularly supposed to show that the stone is "live."

When one of these stones is placed under the eyelid, at the outer corner, the natural movements of the lid in winking push it gradually toward the inner side, and when it comes in contact with the mote which is causing the irritation, this is carried along and finally expelled with it. The belief that such stones have a peculiar detective power, and move about in the eye until they find and remove the irritating substance for which they have been "sent," has no foundation in fact.

It is interesting to know that in the lining membrane of the stomach of the crawfish there are found small bodies which go under the name of "crab's eyes," and look not unlike the true eye-stones. They have sometimes been mistaken for them, and presumably would serve a similar purpose

The Female Hercules

A QUIET, modest girl, of medium height and slender, graceful figure, dressed in a simple brown dress, brightened up only by a narrow red ribbon and tiny bow at the throat, chatting pleasantly away to her visitor in her quiet room. Now and then she was interrupted by the piercing voice of a tame canary—that is Mme. Victorina, the female Hercules, who every evening astonished audiences with feats of her marvelous strength some years ago. For six years she had been before the public as “the strongest woman in the world.” She had astonished Berlin and Paris audiences; had been victorious in her competition with many of the world’s greatest athletes; was honorary member and medalist of the Central Athletic Club of Stettin; honorary member of the Buda-Pesth Hercules Club; of the Hercules Club, Vienna; of the Compagnie Hercule of Paris, and a string of other athletic societies.

“How came it,” our representative asked, “that you adopted your present profession? Had you exceptional strength when young?”

“No, not at once,” she answered, “and when I was quite young I was not stronger than the average sound and healthy child. I was born at Strasburg, and after my father died I went to my uncle’s, who was a circus rider and a performer on the trapeze. But my career as an acrobat came soon to an end, for I fell from a height of forty feet while performing, and ever since I have had the greatest dislike to trapeze performances. Luckily, I only broke the bridge of my nose in the accident, and therefore I was in no way impeded from beginning to train for something else. At that time I became acquainted with my present husband, who was an athlete, and who began my athletic training. This was done by making me practice every day with an expander, just as you see girls use them in calisthenic classes, with the one difference that the firmness of my expander was periodically in-

creased till at last the muscles and sinews of the arms, the shoulders, and the neck got so strong that I could without difficulty work with an expander consisting of an indiarubber rope as thick as my wrist, and I also practised lifting and handling weights, beginning with smaller ones and gradually increasing up to a thousand pounds.

“This, of course, took several years, and in my daily performances I do not always lift quite the full weight which I could lift and carry, but there is never a day on which I do not handle from seven to eight hundred pounds at the performances. Nor do I feel any particular fatigue after the performance. Of course I am rather exhausted at first, just as you are after a long walk or a good day’s work, but that only lasts for a very short time, and the performance is to me nothing but part of an ordinary day’s work, which has to be done in the same way as your meals and other occupations.”

“And do you perform with your hands and arms only?”

“No. I carry weights hung about my body, but I never perform with my legs as some athletes do, who let heavy weights lie on the turned-up soles of their feet, and throw them with or carry them on their legs, hanging over a trapeze or bar.”

“Have I not seen you carrying enormous burdens with your teeth?”

“I do perform with my teeth, too.”

“How is that possible, seeing that your teeth have the appearance of being far too small for any special exertion, and have not even the ivory hue which is said to be the color of the strongest teeth? The bluish whiteness of your teeth is generally considered the color of teeth not strong, which don’t ‘wear’ well.”

“You are right; there is no particular strength in my teeth at all; but it depends chiefly on the strength of the sinews and muscles at the back of your neck whether you can

use your teeth for athletic feats. Now, by the use of the indiarubber expander every muscle in the upper part of the body is splendidly developed, and as long as I can keep my head stiff and erect the teeth have the easiest part of it."

"And does not your health suffer by the constant exertion of such physical powers?"

"Not in the least. I have never been ill in my whole life, and whenever I have had to leave off working it was only on account of accidents. The first was the fall from the trapeze of which I told you, and the second was a bite from a dog, several years ago. This happened at Leeds, and the animal bit my arm so badly that for twenty-two weeks I had to leave off work altogether, and could then only begin very slowly to practice again, at first trying to lift one stone, and gradually adding to the weight. This accident was the more serious as, in order to keep up to the point, I have to practise every day without intermission; and if I only stop for a single week I feel a pain in my limbs after the first few performances. Yes, I work all the year round, except in summer for a short time, during which, however, I have always to practice."

"I suppose you have to diet yourself very carefully in order to be able to go on uninterruptedly with your work?"

"Yes, I have to be careful and regular with my meals. For breakfast I take cocoa, with from four to six new-laid eggs beaten up in it; then in the middle of the day I take dinner, which consists chiefly of meat and vegetables, but I do not, as is usual with athletes, take 'underdone' beef. If I take beef at all, it is a small quantity of well-cooked beef or steak, but I prefer fowls and game, and I find that the nourishment contained in the various parts of a bird is quite as strengthening as beef and far lighter and pleasanter to take. Of late I have taken hardly anything but partridges and pheasants, and I am as well and strong as ever. About four in the afternoon I have a cup of tea, and after that nothing more till after the performance, when I take a hearty supper."

"How long does each performance last?"

"Fifteen minutes, but I have performed twenty minutes on some stages. After that I am exhausted—that is to say, I could not do

any more work without its being visibly an exertion, and no athlete should ever allow that to be the case, for athletic feats are only so long interesting to an audience as they are performed without apparent exertion. Unless this is the case it is painful and disgusting to see feats of muscular strength. My husband and I have often had a great deal of amusement in private in connection with my strength. Once we were at Berlin, and as our luggage is naturally tremendously heavy, and expensive in proportion, we take as much of it as possible into the railway carriage when we are traveling. The porter, who had put our boxes into the van, saw that I was carrying what looked like two small hand-bags. He offered to put them into the carriage for me, and I never saw so astonished and overawed a face than when I handed him the two parcels, each containing one of my heavy weights. Another time we were going up the stairs of our hotel when we found six men engaged in taking an iron safe upstairs.

"The owner, who knew us, said laughingly: 'Oh, here comes madame; she will show you how to do this kind of work.' I had never tried anything like it, but I took a firm hold of the safe, and put it on the next step, although I wore my ordinary clothes. The safe was presented to me by the owner, and I have since then often carried it across the stage."

"You say your ordinary clothes are an impediment to your work; that, I suppose, accounts for the very airy apparel you wear on the stage."

"It does" (with a blush), "and unless I can move about quite freely, I am unable to do my work. There is no help for it; it is the only costume I can wear, and any athlete will understand how impossible it is to perform unless the clothing is as light as possible."

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In a Strange Trap

By JACKSON J. SMITH

CHAPTER ONE

NO one was in the sepulchre-like house when Wyndham Sanderson, senior partner of the firm of Sanderson & Troste, architects, met his death.

Sanderson, like many other dignified old gentlemen who enjoy an evening's rest far better than an expenditure of some of their wealth in search of pleasure, had seated himself on the divan in the library, his legs outstretched, an unopened volume in his lap. Half an hour previous he had bade his wife a mildly pleasant good-by, expressing his wish that she'd enjoy herself. Mrs. Sanderson, in company of others, had gone to the opera. She had remonstrated with him, and even scolded, the point at issue being his utter disregard of the convention that demanded his accompanying her.

But no; he was firm; the command of the doctor decreed otherwise.

For Sanderson's heart was weak. Even as he sat in the library reading the book, he could feel his heart beating irregularly, very irregularly, now loudly and slowly, then with soft recurrence, then suddenly with sledge-hammer strokes.

The doctor had warned Sanderson, and Sanderson heeded the warning. It meant no exertion, no work of any kind in fact, no worry, a stringent diet, no sudden exercise of emotions, no anything!

No enjoyment at all! But Sanderson loved life; he loved it purely for itself. He did not want to die, not yet, anyhow. So the doctor was heeded, and Mrs. Sanderson went alone.

The book was dry, but Sanderson, with the patience that grows with age, read on. A clock from somewhere in the house brought the information that it was nine o'clock. Sanderson fidgeted in his seat; he became aware that a draught issuing from the open window an-

noyed him, and he rose to close the window. It seemed firm; however, and would not lower without some effort on Sanderson's part. When finally he did bring it down and turned to resume his seat and the book he felt a sudden twinge in the region of his heart. The pain of it was remorseless, unbearable, its very suddenness and acute sharpness staggered him. Clutching at his breast, he tottered across the room.

Agony deep-lined his features. There was infinitesimal relief as his body slumped into the unyielding divan, but it passed in an instant and made the pain more terrible than ever. He rocked back and forth agonizingly; the words of help that surged to his lips were but inaudible shrieks.

The inexorable pangs were like the contact of a needle point with a raw nerve.

As he found his voice Sanderson screamed. But the piercing notes wore themselves out on thin air; no one was within range of his voice.

Then he crumpled on the divan, his body outstretched, looking to all the world, were it not for the gruesome contortion of the facial muscles, like a man asleep. A shudder ran through his frame. His fingers twitched, then stiffened. His heart ceased beating.

Wyndham Sanderson was dead. But, evidence to the contrary notwithstanding, Sanderson was not murdered. It is true that, upon being found dead, it was also discovered that two knife thrusts had pierced his heart. Finding a man concealed in the room with a knife in his hand seemed to indicate that he had died a death by violence. And the man thus found, Casey Muller by name, even admitted murdering him.

But in spite of all this, in spite of everything in the way of conclusive circumstantial evidence and confession of guilt, Wyndham Sanderson was not murdered. He died from heart attack. It is well to bear that in mind.

CHAPTER TWO

THE junior partner of the firm of Sanderson & Troste was as entirely the opposite of his senior partner as black is the reverse of white. Where Sanderson was slow and careless, Troste was quick, brilliant and temperamental. Where Sanderson was benign and stretched forth a helping hand, Troste snarled and clenched his fist. What Sanderson lacked in qualities that go to make up a successful business man Troste more than made up for.

Troste was young, selfishly ambitious. His was a scheming mind. Why he had entered into a contract to establish a firm with such a dullard as Sanderson, therefore, was a mystery that only he and another could explain. Theresa Sanderson was the wife of his partner.

It was the old, old story of the eternal triangle. Mrs. Sanderson was comparatively young—but one year older than Arthur Troste. She, too, was selfish, on the lookout for her own interests. She had married her husband only for what money he had.

Arthur Troste had been introduced to Sanderson as "a brilliant young architect." The introduction had been followed by an invitation to Sanderson's home, apropos of talking over a partnership. The younger man had plans of his own, but he did not reckon with Theresa Sanderson.

Infatuation, then an "affair," had followed close upon the heels of the presentation. The thing became a scandal in Sanderson's coterie of acquaintances. Furthermore, it ran true to the saying that the husband is the last one to take notice. Sanderson was a blind man as far as Troste and his wife were concerned.

Sanderson's weak heart was a source of constant thought for the scheming Troste. He hoped for the worst. If his partner should die, it meant that Theresa as well as the firm was his. And when Sanderson ceased coming to the office, attributing the cause to doctor's orders, Troste was jubilant. With the only man that had more of a say-so over the firm than he out of the way, he started to embezzle the firm's money—first hundreds and then thousands.

The day came when money was needed for a huge enterprise that promised big dividends.

Troste was at a loss. He did not have the money needed. In secret attempts to borrow money he failed utterly. He was in despair.

There was the private fortune of his partner.

But he dared not ask. It would stir up a sleeping lion; it would lead to an investigation that would inevitably prove his infidelity to the welfare of the firm.

And so he found himself growing impatient waiting for Sanderson's death. He found himself looking around for other means of instigating that death.

So in his quest for a means of generating Sanderson's unnatural passing away, without endangering his own life, he met up with one K. C. Muller, known to his underworld contemporaries as "Casey."

He was, metaphorically speaking, a rat and a vulture and a snake combined. Hated and loathed even by those with whom he associated, he was none the less an adept with anything, be it safety pin or pistol, that could be used as a weapon. A sneak, a groveling renegade, an addict to narcotics—such terms and others of their sort describe him.

The second encounter between Muller and Troste took place in the latter's apartments late in the afternoon of a certain day. It was prearranged and secret. Certain details were discussed, pro and con. When Muller finally filtered out through the back way a roll of paper currency nestled snugly in the recess of his trousers. And a vision of more that was within his groping grasp constituted a perfect mental tableau.

This was precisely the same day of the evening that Wyndham Sanderson, alone in the house, died of heart failure.

And that same night Troste was among those who accompanied Mrs. Sanderson to the opera.

CHAPTER THREE

THE entrance that Casey Muller effected into the Sanderson home at a certain nocturnal hour was simple. In his prosaic and somewhat hectic career as an outlaw experience had brought to him this rustic knowledge:

that householders, as a rule more than the exception to the rule, believe the homestead immune of robbery when they bolt and bar the front door. So, further armed with what Troste had told him concerning the absence of both servants from the house on that particular date, Muller slipped into the coal cellar and forced his way into the kitchen without semblance of difficulty.

The kitchen was but feebly lighted. Like a noiseless, frescoed shadow, the housebreaker moved over to the door leading to the breakfast room. He listened intently. Troste, when he had given him a plan of the house, had also told him where Sanderson was most likely to be. He had warned him not to rely fully upon that mooted information lest he walk in upon Sanderson unsuspectingly. Muller, therefore, was wary. He was taking no chances.

His trained ear could record no sounds of life emanating from behind the panels of the door, however. With perfect equanimity he opened the door slowly and peered in. The room was dark. He switched on his pocket flashlight, but the penciled gleam revealed no movement. He traversed this room soundlessly, the next likewise. The door at the end of the latter chamber stood slightly ajar. Through this crack Muller looked out into the brilliantly lit hallway.

Again he waited for the slightest sound to mar the morgue-like stillness and thus warn him. But no such sound came. From the opened door of the library room there issued a light. With bated breath he moved towards the door, so cautiously that his movement must be counted in inches. The flashlight was substituted by a knife covered with the tense, stiffened fingers of his right hand.

He glanced in.

The library was silent with the quietude that seems to hover wherever the shadows of death fall. On the divan directly opposite the door lay a man, his face lividly contorted, his arm drooping to the side with an ultra-rigid stiffness. Yet in spite of this his body seemed relaxed, composed, at ease; the book on the floor palpably evidenced that he had fallen asleep while reading.

The hard little eyes peered about. There was no chance of a prying witness. The rest

of the house was deserted, and there was not a single window in the library which opened to the outdoors.

The thing was safe.

The glittering knife completed the job. The weird and cadaverous expression on Sanderson's face remained the same. Not a muscle twitched, not a thing moved. Not a sound escaped him.

Like some gruesome wraith, Muller stooped over the dead Sanderson to make certain that the job was not merely half done. Satisfied, he arose. He licked his dry lips.

A nameless, appalling terror now seized him. Clammy beads of perspiration stood out on his narrow forehead. He found himself shaking.

He listened, listened.

It was then that he heard the sound.

The front door was opening.

CHAPTER FOUR

FROM the very first Mrs. Sanderson did not like the opera. The singers were poor, their voices were raucous and harsh, and the acting was wretched. The star herself seemed at a loss; once her voice cracked fearfully, and instead of passing it off with dignity she reddened and grew embarrassed.

Theresa Sanderson was a very sensitive and impatient woman. The thing soon began to pall upon her. Her nerves were on edge. She fidgeted in her chair innumerable times.

Finally, when the first act came to an almost miserable close, she turned to Troste, who sat beside her.

"This opera is utterly hopeless, Arthur," she said ruefully. "I wish you'd take me home."

"But that is impossible, Theresa. Why, there are three more acts to come. Really, the opera has just begun!"

"I know that. But I wouldn't call this an opera if I were you. It is more of a farce than anything else. I'm too restless to stand through any more of it. Let us go home."

"But," pleaded Troste, "we can't do that. We——"

"And why can't we?"

Troste regarded her with eyes of dismay.

"Because—because it is an actual insult to the people who have invited us here. It is as though we consider the entertainment they are furnishing us unworthy our time. Besides, you don't see any one else leaving."

"That is as they choose. If they enjoy this burlesque, well and good. But I do not. And I intend to leave. Will you take me home, or won't you?"

"But listen to me, Theresa——"

Rising without another word, she went out into the lobby. Troste followed her there, his frame aquiver.

If she went home now——

When she had enveloped herself in her outdoor apparel she turned to the remonstrating Troste with an unimpassioned hauteur.

"Now, are you prepared to escort me home, or are you going to act the part other than that of a gentleman?"

Troste, realizing that further pleading with such obstinacy was futile, shrugged his shoulders. He bowed.

"I am sorry, Theresa," he said, "but the code of ethics, contrary to your idea, demands that I stay here. If you will wait——"

But she was gone.

CHAPTER V

IT was ten-thirty. Two policemen stood on the corner, conversing in low tones.

A richly dressed woman ran up to them. She was an extraordinary sight. She wore no hat, and her hair was disheveled in the breeze. Her frenzied face worked spasmodically; there was terror in the darkly glittering eyes.

"Quick!" she gasped. "My husband. He—he's dead! He's murdered!"

One of the officers sprang forward and held her as she swayed.

"What is it? Where do you live?"

Her answer was a low moan:

"Oh, God!" Suddenly she straightened. "He's dead; he's murdered, I tell you! Why don't you do something? His face—it is horrible! Horrible! And the murderer—he's in there—in the same room!"

Animated with sudden passion, she rushed away. The policemen followed her. They reached the house within a few minutes.

Drawing their revolvers, the officers came briskly into the hallway. Thence into the open-doored library.

On the divan lay the form of Wyndham Sanderson, his face a gruesomely livid mask of terror.

The two men stood still for an instant, shocked into immobility by the sheer horror of it. They turned quickly as Mrs. Sanderson behind them rasped out in a staccato tone:

"Look!"

Their eyes followed her outstretched hand.

Under the divan was a shadow. It was not a shadow cast by the divan itself. It could not have been anything other than——

The first of the bluecoats leveled his pistol point-blank.

"Come on out from under there," he commanded, his voice a grating vibration of authority. "Don't try any monkey business. If you do I'll kill you."

A tense moment, silence, then a slight movement of the shadow from beneath the divan. A body crawled forth—an elongated, shuddering figure, holding in its hand a knife.

He was Casey Muller.

It was the second policeman who recognized him. For a moment he stared into the whimpering face, his own featuring perplexity. Then, brightening, he moved forward, grasped the crook in a way that made him whine with the pain, and tore the dagger from his hand.

"Casey Muller, or I'm a saint!" he exclaimed. "Damme, but I didn't believe you had nerve enough to stoop to murder. A cringin' coward like you!"

He thrust the criminal into a chair.

"Come on now, come clean! No lying! What'd you do it for? Who put you up to it?"

"I didn't do it!" Muller groaned. "I swear to God I didn't. 'I ain't a murderer. No, no, no! I didn't——"

A fist that came crashing in his face stopped his flow of words. A pair of bracelets snapped, holding his wrists. He screamed. His voice rose to a piercing crescendo:

"Don't send me to prison. I hates it; I hates it. I ain't guilty. Some guy put me up to it."

"Who is he?" came the question.

"Some bird. I don't know his name. But I

know where he lives. He gave me money to bump off this guy."

"What's he look like?"

"He's big and skinny, like me. I'll show you where he lives. How long do you think——"

He stopped with a shudder.

His eyes bulged. A frightful, appalling expression came into his face. His mouth went open. His trembling fingers caressed his chin in horror indescribable.

He suddenly pointed a hand towards the doorway.

On the threshold stood Arthur Troste.

CHAPTER SIX

WHEN Mrs. Sanderson was gone restlessness besieged Arthur Troste. He could not sit still with the thought of what might be happening at the Sanderson home. So, though the second act was in full swing, he slipped out of his box without a word to any one and donned his hat and coat.

On the outside he called a taxi, which he dismissed a block from his destination. Throwing back his shoulders as though in anticipation of a trying ordeal, he approached the house.

He had a weird presentiment as he ran up the steps that everything was not as it should be. The very fact that the front door stood ajar served to convince him of that. Yet if he had known what was actually going on within the house, he would have hesitated before approaching the library. As it was he walked unknowingly into what might be termed an unset trap.

Fiery sounds from within came to his ears. Outside the library he paused a moment, but though the door was open he could see nothing unless he were to stand in the doorway. A crazy impulse made him do just that. And before he could step aside unseen the eyes of Muller had descried him.

He could do naught but step into the library with a supercilious toss of his shoulders. A frown of braggadocio was on his face as he watched his own henchman point an accusing hand at him.

"That's him. He paid me to do it. See, here's the money. He's more guilty 'n me."

The murderer jabbed the other hand into his pocket, and drew forth a roll of money that he held up for the policemen to see.

The bluecoats glared at Troste unfriendly-wise. One of them made a hostile move, but Troste raised his hand.

"This man is crazy, officer," he said coolly. "I never saw him before in my life."

Muller jumped to his feet. His face was purple.

"Crazy—am I?" he screamed. "I wish to blazes I was. Then they couldn't send me to the chair, like they will now. What did I want to kill him for, anyway? What grudge did I have against him? I never met up with him before in my life. You paid me to do it, and you're more a murderer 'n me!"

Troste blanched. He took a step backward. "You're a—liar," he stammered hoarsely. "I don't know you—never had anything to do with you."

"You didn't, eh?" came in Muller's piercing call. "All right. I can prove it. I'll show the police where you live. I'll describe its layout to 'em before I go in. And there's a lotta boys down at Red Anderson's that'll swear they saw me with you two days ago. Anderson himself interduced me to you at your own special request. Never laid eyes on me before, eh?"

Troste slumped into a chair. He wiped his brow nervously. He wetted his dry lips.

"Wait——" he began in a shaking voice.

But the snap of the cold steel on his wrists interrupted him. He looked at them fearfully. An expression of singularly tense fear supplanted the pallor of his face.

One of the policemen spoke:

"You two, get ready to come along. There'll be a wagon up here in a short time." He turned to Mrs. Sanderson. "Much obliged, lady. If it wasn't for you we'd never gotten either of 'em. You need a little rest. You're as pale as a ghost." And to Troste and Muller: "Murderers—huh! You never get away with anything of this kind. You'll pay all right, both of you, for this crime."

But none of the little party that featured in that dramatic climax knew that it was a dead man that had been murdered.

Mystery Magazine

The feature stories already published in this magazine are worth reading. The following are the titles of the novelettes contained in the numbers already printed.

- 1 "The Eel Man," by Robert Carlton Brown.
- 2 "Zitana of Malson Rouge," by F. W. Doughty.
- 3 "The Mysterious Web," by Armstrong Perry.
- 4 "Under the Hypnotic Spell," by Dr. H. Eaton.
- 5 "The Sliken Sheath," by Crittenden Marriott.
- 6 "A Fortune Teller's Secret," by Gladys Hall.
- 7 "The Mystic Emblem," by Marie Coolidge Rask.
- 8 "The Cards of Fate," by William Goode.
- 9 "Mr. Bachelor's Apartments," by W. H. Osborne.
- 10 "The Inner Wheel," by Octavius Roy Cohen.
- 11 "The Voice of the Valley," by Robt. C. Brown.
- 12 "The Sign of the Seven Sharks," by Chas. F. Oursler.
- 13 "Under a Mask," by Crittenden Marriott.
- 14 "Case 4,44," by Gladys Hall.
- 15 "After a Millou," by Police Captain Howard.
- 16 "Shadowing the Blue Triangle," by Chas. F. Oursler.
- 17 "The Case of Captain Fortesque," by Redfield Ingalls.
- 18 "The Bird-Headed Sphinx," by Edith S. Tupper.
- 19 "The Double Mystery," by Dr. Harry Eaton.
- 20 "The Magician Detective," by C. F. Oursler.
- 21 "King Cobra Mystery," by George Gilbert.
- 22 "The Haunted Corridors," by Wm. H. Osborne.
- 23 "No Man's Man," by Maxwell Smith.
- 24 "The Trevor Puzzle," by T. C. Harbaugh.
- 25 "The Trail of Roses," by Edmund Condon.
- 26 "The Hindoo Vanishing Clue," by Pauline C. Bouve.
- 27 "Who Was Guilty?" by Beulah Poynter.
- 28 "The Evil Eye," by Chas. F. Oursler.
- 29 "The Thirteenth Door," by Edith Sessions Tupper.
- 30 "The Game of Detective Carey," by L. Jerome.
- 31 "Law-maker and Law-breaker," by Beulah Poynter.
- 32 "The Counterfeit Heiress," by Inspector J. Harrigan.
- 33 "Tracked to China," by Chief Roger O'Brien.
- 34 "After the German Spies," by May Halsey Miller.
- 35 "The Clue in the Box," by Alexander Douglas.
- 36 "Trained by a French Detective," by Rene Renaud.
- 37 "A Drop of Ink," by Lieutenant Robt. W. Warden.
- 38 "The Ten Doctors," by Allan Arnold Fox.
- 39 "The Stain on Page 61," by Chas. T. Jordan.
- 40 "A Masked Mystery," by Police Sergeant Kelly.
- 41 "The Black Soul," by Beulah Poynter.
- 42 "The Sanctuary," by William Hamilton Osborne.
- 43 "The Mystery of the Seven Shadows," by C. F. Oursler.
- 44 "The Sign on the Dragon," by C. Martin Eddy, Jr.
- 45 "The Magic of Detective Woo Fang," by Frank F. Whitfield.
- 46 "The Decoy," by William Hamilton Osborne.
- 47 "The House With 30 Steps," by Ralph D. Porter.
- 48 "When the Clock Struck 13," by Dr. Harry Eaton.
- 49 "A Piece of Blotting Paper," by Dorothy Weber.
- 50 "The \$200,000 Mystery," by Ethel Rosemon.
- 51 "The Case of Dr. Brice," by Mary R. P. Hatch.
- 52 "The Phantom Motor," by Laura Reid Montgomery.
- 53 "The Blackjack," by William Hamilton Osborne.
- 54 "The Whispering Head," by Chas. F. Oursler.
- 55 "The Inspector's Strange Case," by B. Poynter.
- 56 "The Secret of the Sealed Book," by Ethel Rosemon.
- 57 "The Clue of Steel," by Willis Lathrop.
- 58 "Alias Louis Vardon," by William H. Osborne.
- 59 "Mystery of the Old-Time Club," by C. Bingold.
- 60 "Caught With the Evidence," by Ethel Rosemon.
- 61 "A Little Gold Spider," by Cecil Bureleigh.
- 62 "The Velvet Touch," by Julian Darrow.
- 63 "The Clue of the Red Lamp," by Chas. F. Oursler.
- 64 "The Scheme of Solomon Snare," by W. H. Osborne.
- 65 "Quicker Than the Eye," by Ralph Cummins.
- 66 "The Clue of the Dark Room," by Hamilton Craigie.
- 67 "The Tongue of Osiris," by Marc Edmund Jones.
- 68 "Detective Wade's Big Case," by Ethel Rosemon.
- 69 "The Spirit Bell," by Chas. Fulton Oursler.
- 70 "The House Behind the Wall," by Julian Darrow.
- 71 "The Admiral's Spoons," by Wm. H. Osborne.
- 72 "The Canine Clue," by Thos. J. Lally.
- 73 "The Psychic Enemy," by Arthur Wm. Andreen.
- 74 "The Wonder Girl," by Ralph Cummins.
- 75 "On the Wrong Trail," by Ethel Rosemon.
- 76 "The Spirit Witness," by Chas. Fulton Oursler.
- 77 "On the Wrong Trail," by Ethel Rosemon.
- 78 "The Stolen Year," by Edmund Elliot.
- 79 "The Affair at Hollywood House," by Wm. Kofod.
- 80 "A Keyless Mystery," by Hamilton Craigie.
- 81 "Professor Satan," by Charles Fulton Oursler.
- 82 "Who Killed McNally?" by Beulah Poynter.
- 83 "The Clue of the Whorl," by Katherine Stag.
- 84 "The 'Car' and the Ring," by Edmund Elliot.
- 85 "A Clue of Flame," by Jack Becholdt.
- 86 "The Face in the Crowd," by Marc Edmund Jones.
- 87 "The Man in Room No. 7," by Chas. F. Oursler.
- 88 "Four Ten-Dollar Bills," by Henry G. Howland.
- 89 "A Challenge to Power," by Dr. Harry Eaton.
- 90 "The House Next-Door," by Police Captain Howard.
- 91 "The Trance Detective," by Chas. Fulton Oursler.
- 92 "Friday at Twelve," by Katherine Stag.
- 93 "By the Left Hand," by Jack Becholdt.
- 94 "The Melody of Death," by Jack Becholdt.
- 95 "The Trick of the Great Yen How," by William Hamilton Osborne.
- 96 "At Moriarty's," by Fred S. Shuey.
- 97 "The Last Star of the Films," by Jack Becholdt.
- 98 "Counterfeit Clues," by Chas. F. Oursler.
- 99 "The Cross," by W. S. Ingram.
- 100 "A Secret Service Mystery," by Hamilton Craigie and Elliot Balestier.
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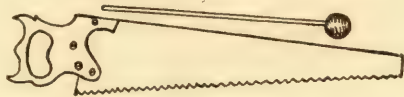
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Mr. Ashelman is one of those thousands who suffered for years, owing to the general belief in the old, false theory that "Uric Acid" causes rheumatism. This erroneous belief induced him and legions of unfortunate men and women to take wrong treatments. You might just as well attempt to put out a fire with oil as to try and get rid of your rheumatism, neuritis and like complaints by taking treatments supposed to drive Uric Acid out of your blood and body. Many physicians and scientists now know that "Uric Acid" never did, never can and never will cause rheumatism; that it is a natural and necessary constituent of the blood; that it is found in every new-born babe; and that without it we could not live. These statements may seem strange to some folks, who have all along been led to believe in the old "Uric Acid" humbug. It took Mr. Ashelman fifty years to find out this truth. He learned how to get rid of the true cause of his rheumatism, other disorders and recover his strength from "The Inner Mysteries," a remarkable book now being distributed free by an authority who devoted over twenty years to the scientific study of this particular trouble.

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YAP A LAND OF SLAVERY

Although the island of Yap has been governed successively by Spaniards, Germans and Japanese, slavery is still practiced here and shows no signs of dying out. The Yap slaves are a darker race than their native masters and they have black, slightly curly hair. They are owned by chiefs and some are the property of wealthy native women.

Tradition says that the slaves are descended from early invaders who come to Yap in war canoes from other islands, but were overpowered by the original inhabitants.

Many of the men were killed, but the women and children were spared and forced to labor in the taro (an edible plant root) patches.

Yap society is divided into three classes, namely: machmach or medicine men, the pilung or aristocracy, and the pim iliaga or slaves. The medicine men are still powerful despite the years of missionary work by Spanish priests. They prophesy, tell fortunes and sometimes put a taboo on various parts of the island. A taboo is a serious matter for the traders, as no native will work on a tabooed plantation.

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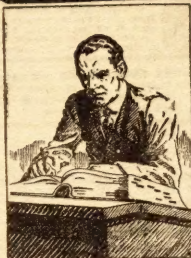
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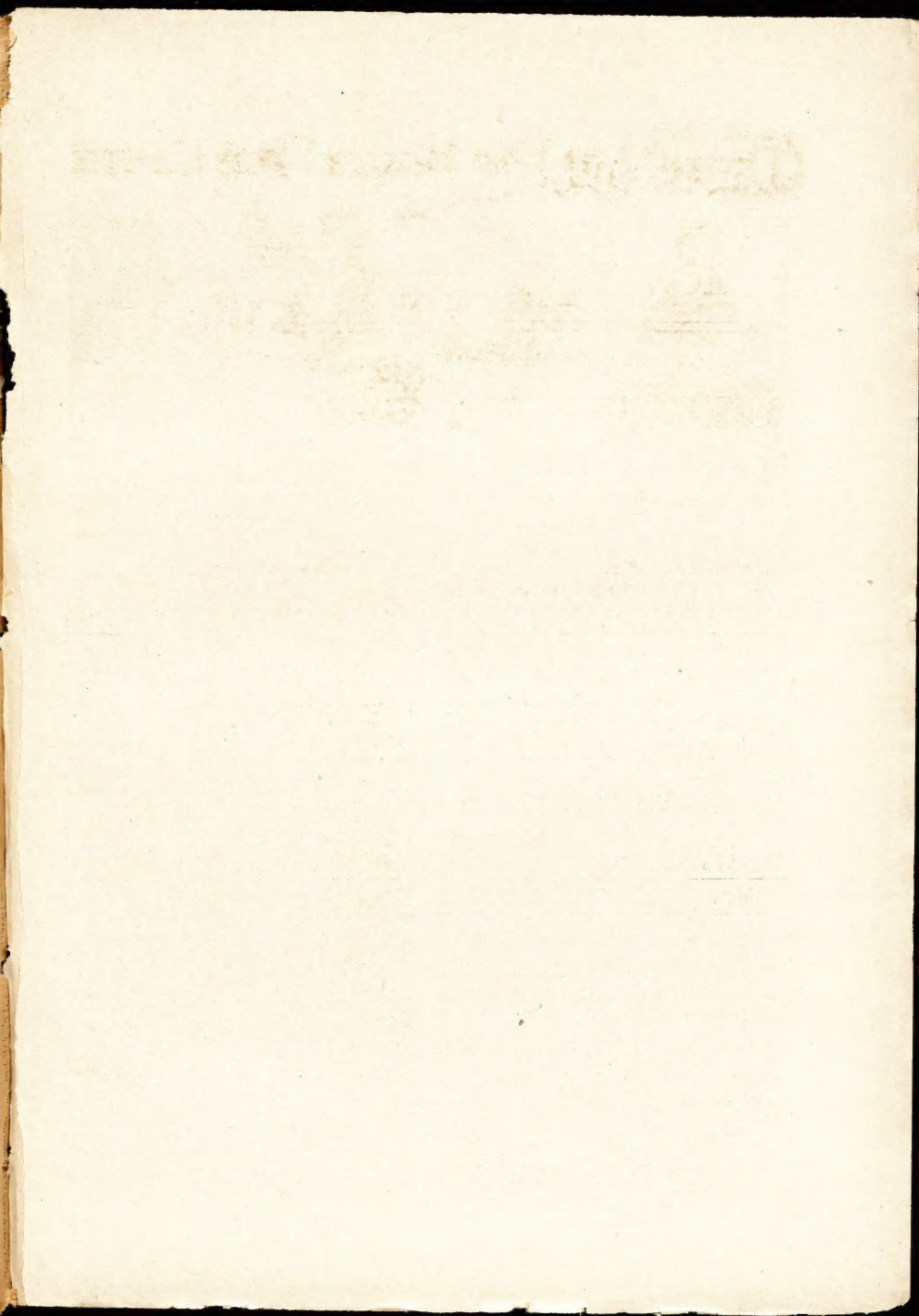
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